POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

ABOUT THE

FIRST ELEVEN CHAPTERS OF GENESIS

Second Edition.

CONTINUED TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

BY THE

REV. EDWARD HUNTINGFORD, D.C.L.
LATE FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
HON. CANON OF WINCHESTER

"Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good."—1 THESS. v. 21

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This Volume is Dedicated,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S KIND PERMISSION,

TO

THE RIGHT REV. EDWARD HAROLD BROWNE,

WHO SO LONG PRESIDED OVER THE IMPORTANT DIOCESE
OF WINCHESTER, REVERED AND LOVED BY ALL
WHO CAME UNDER HIS PASTORAL CARE.

PREFACE.

MANY of the difficulties of the Bible have arisen from traditional misconceptions of its meaning.

Some of them are due to the teachings of the nursery, and others can be traced to the imagination of poets, the conceptions of painters, the unbridled fancy of theologians, or the glosses of those Jews whom our Saviour accused of making void the Word of God by their traditions.

To these we naturally cling with marvellous and often commendable tenacity.

The very style, also, of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, addressed, as it was, to highly imaginative Orientals, who, even now, usually clothe what they have to say in the language of symbol and metaphor, has suggested difficulties to the colder reason of Western believers.

Theology, therefore, during the present century, and especially during the last thirty or forty years, has had to go through the same process as that to which many other branches of human knowledge have been subjected, and with a similar result—the removal of many popular errors and the establishment of the truth upon more solid and enduring foundations.

It was naturally to be expected, however deeply we may regret it, that the faith of some would suffer shipwreck amid the tossing waves of ever-fluctuating human opinion; but the gain to the cause of truth itself has been great and lasting.

The wonderful discoveries which have been made by the geologist, the astronomer, the anatomist, and the archæologist during the last half-century have confirmed in a very remarkable manner the substantial truthfulness of Holy Scripture, although they have at the same time helped us to form more just and reasonable views of the nature and extent of its inspiration, and of the amount of knowledge of the phenomena of the material universe which we have a right to expect from its authors.

These observations apply with especial force to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, from which most of the misconceptions referred to in the following pages have arisen.

They treat of the creation of all things; the original condition and fall of man; his prospects of recovery; his early struggles; his rapid increase; his progress in civilisation; his hopeless moral corruption; the judgment of the Flood; the founding of Babylon; and the distribution of the different races of mankind over the world. And all this vast amount of information is compressed into eleven short chapters.

The solution of the difficulties which they suggest is not to be found in any attempt to explain away the obvious meaning of the statements of the sacred writer, or to reconcile them with the well-established facts of science, but in a more close attention to the actual words of Moses and a more rational view of the nature and extent of his inspiration.

That Moses, or the prophet who composed or compiled this introduction to Genesis, was guided by a light immeasurably brighter than that given to any other ancient author is evident :—

1. Because he attributes the creation and the ordering of the whole universe to the One Living and True God.

2. Because he alone, in his description of the beginning of things, avoids all attempts to account for the origin of God Himself, and keeps clear of all the mythological and impossible nonsense which is found in other writings on the subject.

3. Because he shows the profoundest wisdom in his account of the original constitution of man's body and soul; of moral freedom; of conscience; of the motives of the human heart; of the nature of temptation, and of the natural and hereditary consequences of sin.

4. Because he teaches the purest morality, pointing out the blessedness and reward of "walking with God;" the certainty of the punishment of sin; and the great value of modesty and filial reverence.

5. Because he records two prophecies, of which the first was literally fulfilled in Christ, and the second has been fulfilled, and is still being conspicuously fulfilled, in the history of the world.

The enemies of our holy religion are well aware of the importance of this introduction to the Bible. Hence their ceaseless efforts to undermine this foundation of Christian truth. But this part of the Bible, like many others, has suffered more from rash and injudicious defenders than from open enemies; and just now the truth is exposed to a new and even greater danger than before.

It is impossible to read the sermons, university lectures, and other works which have been published during the last few years without fearing that many clergymen, after having too long insisted upon the literal interpretation of many parts of Scripture against the strong and increasing light of science, are now going to the opposite extreme, and are prepared to concede far more to the enemies of the truth than any present or conceivable future discoveries can render necessary.

We shall avoid both these extremes by going to the Bible itself, and studying with unprejudiced minds what it actually says, and not what men, either in these or former days, have represented it as saying.

This the author has attempted to do, and now gives the reader the conclusions at which he has arrived by this process.

They are the result of the thought and general reading of more than forty years, during which he has watched with deepest interest the progress of opinion, especially on questions connected with these early chapters of the Bible, and has studied with great care the works of many of those able thinkers who have lately thrown so much light on both Science and Theology.

To them he acknowledges himself deeply indebted, even when he cannot fully agree with their conclusions, for much assistance in this attempt to remove some unnecessary stumbling-blocks out of the path of the thoughtful and humble believer.

WINCHESTER,
October, 1891.

INTRODUCTION
TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ENCOURAGED by the reception which his attempt to remove some of the popular misconceptions about the earlier chapters of Genesis has met with, the author of the following pages has ventured to add to the present edition some remarks concerning the structure of the whole book, and the probable chronological order of the events recorded in it, which he hopes his readers will consider rather as suggestions to aid them in forming their opinions than as attempts to settle finally these perplexing questions.

It was to be expected that such a book as Genesis, coming down to us from such a remote age and through so many vicissitudes of fortune in the nation to whose care it was entrusted, should, so to speak, bristle with difficulties. It is scarcely less than miraculous that it should contain so few, and it must not be forgotten that we have no external aid whatever to help us to remove them. The student who can read the book in the Hebrew has before him all the data on which any solid argument can be founded, as distinguished from mere speculative theories.

In examining any period of Greek, Roman, or later European history we have contemporary records of some kind to guide us, but in studying Genesis we have absolutely none. It is a very simple but extremely compressed

narrative of events which happened centuries before the dawn of the earliest history. It is pre-historic in the truest sense of that word, and yet it is free from every kind of myth or legend, and introduces us to men and women much like ourselves, but in many instances morally very much better than the ordinary modern Christian. It would be well, indeed, if we could all, or many of us, equal the faith and loving obedience of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Joseph.

It is possible that the discoveries of the explorer of ruins and the decipherer of Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions may soon throw much light upon the narrative, and already they have met with indications of legends about the Creation, the Fall, and the Deluge, which, though much distorted and full of absurdities, are yet evidently traditions of events which really happened, and of which a more simple description is given in Genesis.

But, unfortunately, there is a school of critics who have made up their minds that a work so free as Genesis is from mythological nonsense and from erroneous conceptions of God, could not have been written much earlier than about 500 B.C., and therefore that the composer of Genesis must have got his ideas from these legends, and reproduced them in his composition stripped of their absurdities. But the believer in the authenticity of the Bible will think it much more probable, as a matter of common-sense, that the documents in the possession of Moses should have contained the original records, and that the Assyrian priests should have been the corrupters of the story of the Creation, the Temptation, and the Flood.

The unique position, also, which Genesis holds in the Old Testament is rarely sufficiently considered by the ordinary reader, or even by the theological student; and it is misleading to regard it simply as the first book of the Penta-

teuch. Of course, it is the first of those five books which have come down to us as the books of Moses; but if we would understand it, we must learn to look at it quite by itself.

It is cut off from the rest of the Pentateuch by a silent interval of two or, more probably, of four centuries. It is important to realise this. It is as though a modern historian were to write a History of England up to the reign of Henry VII., and then continue his work with a description of the events and legislation of the last half-century, with little or no notice of anything which took place in the interval. Or as though a writer towards the close of the last century were to describe the discovery of America and the first settlements of the pilgrim fathers in the Northern Continent, and then pass at once to the War of Independence and the formation of the Constitution of the United States.

But Genesis stands out in strong contrast with the rest of the Old Testament, not only because the writer is dealing with events which happened ages before his own time, but also because those events and the state of society when they occurred differ so widely from anything mentioned in the subsequent books of the Bible. And it is this circumstance which proves it to be the most ancient document or collection of documents which has come down to us through the instrumentality of the Hebrew race.

The proofs of the extreme antiquity of Genesis are quite independent of any linguistic characteristics or supposed varying authorship of its component parts. If it could be proved that the Hebrew is that of the age of Ezra—which, in the absence of all contemporary writings, is not possible—or that one chapter was written by the Elohist and another by the Jehovist—which, as we hope to show, is a modern fiction entirely destitute of proof—we should still have to

account for the fact that the author or compiler of Genesis, quite undesignedly, and by recording the simple annals of a family, gives us a view of a state of society and religion markedly different from anything with which a later Jew, except from these writings, could have been acquainted.

If the historical events which are so simply narrated in Genesis did not happen, or were not recorded, their invention by any Jew of an age between Moses and Christ, or indeed in any age, is quite inconceivable.

But there is another and a more important reason for looking at Genesis as standing quite by itself in the Old Testament.

It is in truth the Primeval Gospel, the record of a primeval revelation, of a pure spiritual and universal religion, a religion the very essence of which consisted in a state of heart towards God, a firm and undoubting trust in Him and obedience to His moral law. As such it stands out in quite as strong contrast as the Gospel of Christ with the Mosaic Law.

That law, as we are told by one who knew it well, was "added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). Its appointment was a very stringent remedial measure, to reduce men, no longer willing to be sons, to the state of servants; to isolate a chosen people; to check the downward tendency to superstition and idolatry; and to prepare the way for Christ, the seed promised first to Adam and then to Abraham.

And so Christ and His apostles entirely overleap the parenthetical law of Moses, and by sayings such as "It was not so from the beginning," send us back to Eden and to Abraham for a true conception of the sanctity of marriage, of Divine worship, and of the faith working by love, by which alone we can be justified.

The modern fiction, also, that the knowledge of the One

Living God is the result of a kind of mental evolution, and has been gradually thought out for himself by man—a theory opposed to all known facts—is plainly contradicted by the author of Genesis, who teaches us that this great truth was revealed from the beginning, and kept alive by subsequent revelations imparted to one chosen man and his descendants—a small, isolated, and despised nation.

And then, as regards that other modern fiction of hyper-criticism, that we may distinguish the authorship of parts of the Old Testament from the preference shown by the writers for one or other of the sacred names, Elohim, God; or Jehovah, Lord; a careful examination of the way in which those names are used will show that it is a groundless assumption.

It is probable that the Book of Genesis, in part at any rate, is a compilation from written materials which had come down to Moses. But no solid argument for a later date or other authorship of these writings can be founded on the writer's use of the sacred names, Elohim or Jehovah.

It is also a popular misconception to imagine that a great amount of Hebrew scholarship is necessary to justify the formation of an opinion of the grounds on which this modern theory rests. Any careful reader of the Greek or English versions can easily decide the question for himself, so far at least as the sacred names are concerned. The Greek equivalent for Elohim in the Septuagint and New Testament is θεος, and the English, God; and κυριος, Lord, usually stands for Jehovah in the Septuagint, and is used of Jesus in the New Testament as the Jehovah Incarnate, Jehovah-Saviour.

There are a few passages, indeed, in which Elohim only occurs as the name of God; and there are also a few in which the writer speaks of Jehovah exclusively. But to argue from this that the authors in each instance knew or

commonly spoke of God by one of these names only, would be to reject the evidence afforded by a hundred other passages in which these sacred names are used indifferently by the Hebrews for the One True God. And yet they have not the same meaning. They differ in the Hebrew Bible as much as θεος and Ἰησους, God and Jesus, in the New Testament. Elohim is the generic name for God. It is a plural noun, signifying probably "the strong ones," equivalent to our English expression, "the Higher Powers," and so used sometimes of angels or even of rulers. But the Hebrews, being profound believers in the Unity of God, unite it with a singular verb, and rarely allow a plural verb or participle in agreement with it except when it is used of heathen gods, angels, or princes. As the generic name of God, therefore, it is a majestic plural, involving the idea of universal power.

The name Jehovah, on the other hand, is the name of God as personally revealing Himself to man, as He Whom we Christians know as the Second Person of the Trinity, the only One Person of the Trinity Who, either before or after the Incarnation, can be brought under the observation of the human senses. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (St. John i. 18). "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (St. John xiv. 9).

As such, Jehovah is used exclusively in the Old Testament for God, as the God of His people; and eventually as the Theocratic King of Israel, and so cannot be used, like Elohim, for any other than the True God. This is clearly proved by the words of Elijah: "If Jehovah be the Elohim, follow Him; and if Baal (be the Elohim), then follow him" (1 Kings xviii. 21).

And here we have the article prefixed, the Elohim, the

God, *i.e.*, the True God, as distinguished from all those called Elohim by the heathen.

Bearing in mind this distinction in the meaning of the names, we see how fitting is the exclusive use of Elohim in the great drama of Creation, Gen. i. and ii. 3; and how equally fitting is the introduction of the name Jehovah in the following passages in which God is represented as holding communion with man.

But this combination of the names Jehovah-Elohim in Gen. ii. 4 and iii. does not fall in with the preconceived theory of some critics that this passage is the work of one whom they call the Jehovist, from his use of the name Jehovah. Therefore, rather than give up their theory, they suggest that the Text has been tampered with. Jehovah-Elohim, they say, is not a Hebraic expression, and so Elohim must have been added to Jehovah by some later editor of Genesis to soften the abrupt transition of the Elohim of one narrator to the Jehovah of the other!! That is to say, if the Hebrew Text is against our theory, so much the worse for the Hebrew Text; it must have been altered! (See article on the Pentateuch in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.)

Such reasoning will not incline the ordinary reader to accept without considerable caution other conclusions of such critics. But this is only one out of many similar attempts which have been made by critics of this school to maintain their *a priori* theories at any cost. For example, they have determined that Deuteronomy was a production of the age of Josiah. If so, we must consider the Deuteronomist to have been one of the cleverest writers of fiction ever known. They admit that he never makes a slip. He never betrays ignorance of Egypt, or the wilderness, or in any way proves himself an impostor. But they give as the chief reason why the book cannot have been written by Moses that from beginning to end it teaches the purest

Monotheism! They having made up their minds that such knowledge of the One True God was in advance of the age of Moses!

And what, then, is the meaning and origin of the name Jehovah?

No satisfactory account of it has yet been given, unless we accept the suggestion of the American Hebraist, MacWhorter, which certainly seems consistent with the words of Scripture. Jewish superstition, forbidding its pronunciation or even correct pointing, and Alexandrian philosophy, suggesting an abstract and metaphysical sense, have stood in the way of any attempt to elicit its meaning and origin from the actual words of the Bible.

Having first mentioned that on which all Hebraists are agreed, that the name should be pronounced Jahveh, as being evidently derived from the most absolute form of the future tense of the ancient verb Havah, which means "to be" or "to become," this writer directs our attention to the historical origin of the name suggested by the narratives of Gen. iv. and Exod. iii. 13–15.

The verb from which Jehovah is formed is not a mere auxiliary like our verb "to be," but signifies "to become," and "in the future He will be," and so when made into a noun, "He Who will be," paraphrased for us in the Apocalypse as the ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, "Who is, and was, and cometh." How is it used then, in Gen iv.?

God had promised that one of Eve's children should destroy the serpent's power. How natural that she should expect her first-born to be that child, and so should exclaim at his birth, "I have gotten a man, even he who will be," our predicted deliverer! Some of the old commentators, observing that the translation, "I have gotten a man, even Jehovah," is a more natural rendering of the Hebrew than "with Jehovah" or "by the help of Jehovah," fancied that

it had been revealed to Eve that the destroyer of man's enemy would be not only her child, but also Divine, and so that she expected her first-born to be that Incarnate Saviour. But this is extremely improbable, and it is much more likely that she thought her first-born was the human deliverer who was to come, and so exclaimed, "I have gotten a man, even he will be, or he who will be, who was to come." The impossibility of any man being their deliverer becoming soon apparent, men began to look to God alone as their future helper; and so in process of time in the days of Enos "men began to call upon the name of the Lord;" literally translated, "Then it was begun to invoke (*i.e.*, to call upon God) by the name Jehovah;" not now any longer "the man who is to come," but "the God who is to come."

From this time Jehovah, "He who cometh," became the name of God to all who still looked for the fulfilment of the original promise, although hope long deferred and familiar use soon caused its true meaning to be forgotten, just as few Christians, for the same reason, realise the original meaning of the name Jesus, or Joshua, Jehovah the Saviour. And so its origin and deep meaning were revealed again to Moses in the wilderness, and grammatically traced out for him. Moses asks God for His name, and the name is given, not in the present tense, but in the most absolute form of the future: "I WILL BE, THAT I WILL BE." "Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I WILL BE hath sent me unto you." Here the verb is in the first person of the future tense. But immediately after it is explained to Moses that he is to use the third person of the future, as a noun, giving to Israel the old familiar name so constantly used by their forefathers, although they had quite lost sight of its true significance, which was now to begin to be realised by their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. They

had looked up to God always as the Almighty; but they had not known the full meaning of His name, Jehovah; they had ceased to regard Him as their Great Deliverer Who was to come. From this time through all their generations Jehovah, "He who will come," was to be the special name of God as the God of the hope of Israel, the ὁ ἐρχόμενος of the Baptist. "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: Jehovah, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, my memorial unto all generations" (Exod. iii. 14, 15). (See Article iv. in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January 1857: John Wiley, New York.)

But whatever may be the origin or meaning of the name, it is very precarious to found any theory of the different authorship of passages upon the use of Jehovah or Elohim. The names, though used of the same One God, are not more synonymous than Jesus and Christ, or than Jesus Christ and God. And so the exclusive use of one or other of the sacred names is sometimes intentional, but more often purely accidental, as in the case of modern sermon-writers.

Out of the numberless passages which prove that every Hebrew writer must have been familiar with these two names, the following may be selected in which Elohim, the Angel of Elohim, Jehovah, and the Angel of Jehovah are used indifferently of the same Divine Person:—

"The Angel of Jehovah appeared unto him (to Moses) in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Moses turns to look at the bush. "And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, Elohim called unto him out of the midst of the bush." (Exod. iii. 2–4.)

In Judges vi. 11–24 we have an account of God's appearing to Gideon, in the course of which we read: "The Angel of Jehovah came and sat under the oak" (ver.

11.) . . . "And Jehovah looked upon him" (ver. 14). Not now the Angel of Jehovah, but Jehovah. But in ver. 20 we read: "And the Angel of Elohim said unto him." And then Gideon exclaims, ver. 22, "Alas! O Adonai, Jehovah, for I have seen the Angel of Jehovah face to face." Thus the same visible messenger is called indifferently the Angel of Jehovah and the Angel of Elohim, and is recognised by Gideon as Divine.

The same is the case in Judges xiii. 3. "The Angel of Jehovah appeared unto the woman" (to the wife of Manoah). She tells her husband that "a man of Elohim" came to her, looking like "the Angel of Elohim." Then, ver. 8, Manoah prays to "Jehovah" that "the man of Elohim" may appear again. Then, ver. 9, "Elohim hearkened to the voice of Manoah (who had prayed to Jehovah); and the Angel of Elohim came again unto the woman." Ver. 13, the Angel of Jehovah speaks. And finally, when the Angel has departed, Manoah says, "We shall surely die, for we have seen Elohim."

In Gen. xvii. 1 Jehovah appears to Abraham; ver. 3, Abraham falls on his face and Elohim speaks to him. Ver. 7, He promises to be an Elohim to him and his children. And when the interview is over, commenced by Jehovah, we read, ver. 22, "And Elohim went up from Abraham."

In Gen. xviii. Abraham pleads with Jehovah for Sodom; but in chap. xix. 29 it is Elohim who destroys Sodom, remembers Abraham, and rescues Lot.

In Gen. xx. 6 Elohim rescues Abimelech; ver. 17, Elohim heals Abimelech's servants; but, ver. 18, it was Jehovah who had closed their wombs.

In Gen. xxi. Jehovah visits Sarah at the time which Elohim had appointed.

In Gen. xxii. Elohim tries Abraham; but it is the Angel

of Jehovah who calls to him out of heaven and stays his hand, shows him the ram, and blesses him.

In Gen. xxiv. Abraham's servant swears by Jehovah the Elohim of heaven and earth, and blesses Jehovah the Elohim of his master.

In Gen. xxviii. Jacob sees the Angels of Elohim on the ladder in his dream; but it is Jehovah that stands above it, and calls Himself Jehovah, the Elohim of Abraham and Isaac.

In Gen. xxxi. Laban says to Jacob, "Jehovah watch between me and thee;" but immediately after adds, "Elohim is witness between me and thee."

In Gen. xxxii. the Angels of Elohim meet Jacob; but he prays to the Elohim of his fathers, Jehovah, who told him to return.

In Gen. xxxix. Jehovah is with Joseph; but he will not sin against Elohim. He could not call his God Jehovah when speaking to Potiphar's wife. And, in the same way, Joseph as well as his father and brethren call God Elohim when with the Egyptians.

With these and other passages before him, the reader who has no theory to support about the varying dates and authorship of different parts of the Bible will no longer feel disturbed in mind by the imposing capitals E or J standing for the Elohist, or the Jehovist, as the author of this or that passage of an historical book of the Old Testament or of the Psalms.

There is something truly alarming to the ordinary Christian in these capital letters, which seem to imply that the authorship of the Old Testament has been quite settled by a profound criticism the conclusions of which it is impossible, and a proof of being behind the times, to question; that E must have written this, and J must have written that; or, at any rate, when there appears to be some difficulty, that J. E. was the editor of the passage.

The capitals P. C. also frequently occur in the works of negative critics. They stand for Priestly Code, or rather for the inventor or inventors of the Priestly Code, or that elaborate ritual of the Tabernacle and the sacrificial and ceremonial laws which we commonly attribute to Moses, and which are written in the Pentateuch.

These they feel confident are the inventions of a later age, and were framed, to support their high sacerdotal claims, by the priests who were the originators of that which they call Judaism, the system of Temple-worship and rigid ceremonial observances existing in the time of Christ, and the gradual growth, as they affirm, of a few preceding centuries. The mention of these supposed authors of portions of the Mosaic Law would have been out of place in a work on Genesis, had not some parts of that book also been attributed by critics to P. C.

The principal argument (supported, we must admit, by a vast amount of cumulative evidence) upon which this novel theory rests, when summed up in a few words, appears to be the assumption that the neglect of a law, and the universal prevalence of practices forbidden by it, and yet condoned if not commended by the highest authorities, prove that that law did not at that time exist, or that it was unknown. This, it must be allowed, would be a very convincing argument if we did not know that the Christian Church for many ages treated the New Testament in the same way.

These writers forget that the Book of Judges reveals a state of things existing for many centuries which has only been equalled since by the entire blotting out of European civilisation and the fearful corruption of Christianity which followed upon the disruption of the Roman Empire. Neither do they remember that the Books of Samuel and the Kings give us a very compressed account of the gradual recovery of Israel from their apostasy, greatly impeded by the schism

of Jeroboam, and by the crimes, idolatry, and fierce persecutions of the prophets by many of the kings of Israel and Judah; which also finds its modern counterpart in the gradual recovery of Christianity from its corruptions in spite of many obstacles, and the growing recognition of the claims of the New Testament upon the obedience of the Christian Church.

It is indeed well for us that we have the most certain proofs that the New Testament, as we now have it, existed in the second century after Christ, if not earlier, and was then acknowledged to be the work of the Apostles, for otherwise Macaulay's New Zealander two thousand years hence would be able to disprove the authenticity and genuineness of the Christian Scriptures by arguments far less capable of being answered than any brought by the critics of this age against the early date of the Pentateuch.

That we may feel the force of this, let us try to imagine how a professor of English and other dead languages in a university in Korea, China, or Central Africa in the year 3891 A.D. might sum up the result of his inquiries about the date and genuineness of the writings of the New Testament.

It requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose that in 2000 years our civilisation and much of our literature may have shared the fate of all previous civilisations, such as those of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, and Rome. Let us hope this will not be the case; but it will be contrary to all past experience if it is not so. At any rate it will suit the purpose of our present argument to imagine the following to be an extract from an article in, we will say, the *Thirty-ninth Century*, written by the above-mentioned learned professor of English, Greek, and Hebrew—an article intended for the learned, and therefore written in English :—

"We may venture to state as the result at which, in spite

of considerable differences of opinion, the higher criticism of our enlightened age has arrived, that the New Testament, as we now have it in its integrity, can scarcely be dated much earlier than about the middle of the nineteenth century A.D.

"We find, indeed, many traces of the existence of at least some portions of this book all through the history of the dark continent of Europe during that long period of violence, disorder, and ignorance which followed the disruption of the Roman Empire. But it is inconceivable that the record of the sublime and humane teaching of Him Who is represented as praying for His murderers could have been known in those days; although it would appear probable that subsequent editors of the scanty histories of those times may have inserted here and there notices of the book to support their own theory of the early date of the whole volume.

"We find, for example, practices most abhorrent to the literal words and whole spirit of the humane doctrines of Christ, not only prevailing widely throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, almost from the age of Constantine to that of Louis XIV. of France, but condoned, nay, rather, commended and enforced by the very highest authorities in Church and State.

"Is it conceivable, we ask, that those large portions of the New Testament, as we now have it, which in spirit if not in word utterly condemn such practices as the punishment of a man for his conscientious religious opinions by the horrors of the torture-chamber, the rack, or the stake, could have been known to the rulers of Europe in those days, and not only known, but, as we are required to believe, acknowledged by them to be inspired?

"And then we trace through the fourth and following centuries a gradual change passing over that organised

society called the Church, which the Founder of Christianity is supposed to have declared to be 'a kingdom not of this world,' resulting in the formation of that long-dominant hierarchy of which the Bishops of Rome and the Western Emperors were the acknowledged heads.

"We see that this kingdom was most intensely worldly; that its priests and kings ruled men with rods of iron, compelling the obedience not only of the body but of the mind and of the convictions of heart at the risk of tortures and death.

"And yet we are required to believe that the framers of this imitation of the worst forms of Judaism had in their possession and regarded as inspired the prophecies of Christ and His Apostles, which are supposed to predict and condemn this state of things.

"Can we, then, it may be asked, form any idea of the probable dates of the various portions of this remarkable book?

"1. First, we may fairly assume that it rests on a sound historical basis. Jesus Christ lived, taught, and died by crucifixion in the reign of Tiberius. He proved Himself to be Divine by rising again from the dead; and He founded that organised society which soon came to be called the Christian Church.

"These facts, we may be sure, were handed down to succeeding generations, and perhaps recorded in writings which formed the nucleus of the present new Testament.

"2. Secondly, there can be little doubt that the prophetical portions of the book, such as parts of the Epistles to the Thessalonians and to Timothy, and especially the whole of the Apocalypse, could scarcely have existed, or at least have been known, much earlier than the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.

"These prophecies were evidently invented by the Re-

formers, for they were extensively used by them in their long struggle with the Roman Hierarchy, which they believed to be plainly predicted and condemned in these mysterious visions, so like those of Daniel, from which they were probably copied.

"It is interesting to observe that these prophecies, whether genuine or spurious, so plainly pointed to Rome and predicted God's judgment upon it, that even the Roman priests, such was their incapacity as critics, found it necessary to meet this awkward argument of the Reformers by asserting that the visions referred to the fate of pagan Rome. Many of them, however, seeing that the prophecy could not have been exhausted by that judgment, maintained that their complete fulfilment was to be looked for in an infidel Rome of the future.

"3. But, thirdly, what must we think of the Sermon on the Mount, and many similar passages which have had, we know, such an amazing influence in softening the manners of men, improving the condition of the lower classes, and entirely putting an end to all wars and persecutions of men for religious opinions? We need not suppose them to be wholly fictitious, but we can scarcely assign them a date much earlier than about the middle of the nineteenth century, when we find that there was a great and most conspicuous revival, or rather, we should say, the beginning of Christianity as we now understand that humane religion.

"These doctrines were doubtless the product of truly spiritual minds, early in that century, meditating on the Historical Christ, and forming more just conceptions of what must have been the principles of such a Divine Teacher.

"We, in these days of more strict literary morality, may seem to see something approaching to conscious fraud in this attempt to support their sublime philosophy of humanity

by the name of that Great Prophet. But to the men of those days we may be sure it was far otherwise; and they felt that they were only doing honour to the Founder of the Christian religion by representing what they conceived must have been His teaching in all the grandeur of its purity, truthfulness, and love."

We may congratulate ourselves that we are better off than the perplexed supporter of orthodox views concerning the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament is likely to find himself in the year 3891. Possessing, as we do, the literary remains of the ancient Roman world, we have still needed our Paleys, Butlers, and Lightfoots to establish by their researches and arguments the authenticity of the Gospel narratives. What will be the position of the student 2000 years hence, when, deprived of these helps, he has to meet the criticisms of the writer of the above-mentioned article?

May we not learn, then, from this supposed case, that the universal neglect by the Israelites of the laws of Moses is no proof whatever of their non-existence, or even of their not being acknowledged by them to have been the institutions of the Founder of their religion?

But it is supposed by some that the date or genuineness of the Hebrew Bible may be rendered doubtful by the style of the language in which it has come down to us.

But here we must remember that, as regards language and style, we have absolutely nothing to guide us outside the Old Testament itself. If we except the Moabite stone and an inscription in the Aqueduct made in Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah, scarcely a line of original ancient Hebrew exists except that of the Bible. And then, as regards the kindred Aramaic dialect or Chaldee, we know nothing whatever of its date or origin. It was certainly spoken by the educated, but unknown to the common

people in Jerusalem, in the reign of Hezekiah. "Speak to thy servants in the Syrian language (Arâmith, in Aramaic); for we understand it: and speak not with us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall" (2 Kings xviii. 26).

Did Aramaic, then, begin to be spoken only in the reign of Hezekiah? A language used as the *lingua Franca* of the nations of Western Asia in the reign of Hezekiah must have been very ancient and widely known. Whose language was it originally? It is called the language of Aram. But Padan-Aram, and, earlier, Ur of the Chaldees, was the cradle of the Hebrew race. Aramaic is a mere dialect of Hebrew; far closer to the Hebrew than Italian is to Latin, or modern Greek to the language of Xenophon.

May it not, then, have been originally Hebrew? The language of Abraham greatly modified by constant admixture with other tongues, whereas many causes naturally rendered more permanent the speech of a race so exclusive as that of the Hebrews?

That a language akin to Hebrew was widely known in Western Asia when the Semitic Assyrians gained the mastery over the Accadian races has been proved by Professor Sayce and others from the cuneiform inscriptions.[1]

[1] "The term 'Chaldee' is derived from the belief that it represented the language of Babylonia, which the Jews are supposed to have adopted during the Exile. The decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions has shown that this was not the case. The language of Babylonia was the same as that of Assyria. . . . Assyrian resembled Hebrew much more than it resembled 'Chaldee.' Chaldee, or Aramaic, as we ought to term it, was really spoken by the Aramean tribes of Syria and Mesopotamia. . . . A *lingua Franca* . . . understood wherever mercantile transactions were carried on. . . . In Babylonia the Jews were forced to learn either Assyrian or the mutually intelligible Aramaic, in order to be understood by their masters"—*Sayce on Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. 34, 35.

Let us suppose, then, for the sake of argument, that Terah and his son Abraham spoke the language of the Chaldees and of Padan-Aram about 2000 B.C., and that that language was Hebrew. What, in this case, would happen?

A few centuries after the call of Abraham and subsequent isolation of his children, other dialects of his language would begin to form themselves, becoming eventually the Hebrew and the kindred forms of Aramaic.

This divergence must have become more complete when the Israelites went into Egypt, and still more when they were made the bondsmen of Pharaoh, and when they must have become bilinguists, speaking their own beloved Hebrew amongst themselves, but compelled to learn the language of their masters.

No nation in the history of the world has been so exclusively and intensely national as Israel. "It is a people that dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxiii. 9).

Besides this, they were Orientals, and as such conservative beyond all Western experience. They were also jealous preservers of a body of sacred writings, the charter of high religious privileges and the ground of the national hope.

What wonder if their language should be far more permanent than that of any other people! And yet what wonder if a word or expression, afterwards more common in the kindred Aramaic, should occasionally appear even in their earlier books!

And then these exclusive people, with their fixed language, find themselves again in Chaldæa, after an interval of perhaps fourteen or fifteen centuries, among a nation speaking a dialect of their own Hebrew tongue and the language of the educated world.

Here again they were obliged to become bilinguists,

cherishing their native Hebrew, yet compelled to speak Aramaic.

It is a mistake, however, to imagine that Hebrew became a dead language even after the return from Babylon. A language dies hard, and especially the language of sacred writings and of a people full of national enthusiasm. But the best proof of this is the fact that the post-Exilic prophets wrote in Hebrew, and the prophets of Israel did not speak only to the more educated, but wished to be understood by the common people. Thus Hebrew would only gradually become to the Jews after the age of Malachi what Latin became to the Christians of the West—the language of the learned, the language of the Bible and the Synagogue.

It was only natural under these circumstances that Hebrew should share the fate of Latin and become as much debased as the barbarous ecclesiastical Latin of the Middle Ages of Christianity.

The important bearing of these historical facts upon the style of the language of the Bible can be appreciated by any intellectual reader though unacquainted with the Hebrew and Aramaic languages.

But a careful comparison by a most competent judge of the language of Ecclesiasticus and the Targums with that of Daniel seems likely to set at rest at any rate the all-important question of the date of that prophet; and we may hope that the same learned writer will settle for us many other linguistic difficulties, or supposed difficulties, of the earlier books of the Old Testament—

We may, therefore, close this introduction with an extract from the *Expositor* of 1890, No. 4, p. 299, where Professor Margoliouth thus writes of Ecclesiastes.

"In the case of Ecclesiastes (or Koheleth), that their absence (the absence of certain words of constant occurrence in the Rabbinic writings, having their equivalents of

equally frequent occurrence in the Biblical writings) is significant of period, can be proved by as cogent evidence as it is possible in such matters to adduce. For there is a Targum to Koheleth, written unquestionably many generations after the original, in which both the words and ideas of Koheleth are translated into those of the Targumist's time. Now, this Targumist employs, in dealing with the matter of Koheleth, the very technicalities of which Koheleth is ignorant, but with which Ben-Sira is familiar. . . . The Targumist of Koheleth is beyond question later than Koheleth—later, probably, by ages; the technicalities and phrases which he introduces into his paraphrase in order to make Koheleth intelligible must be those of a later age, else why should Koheleth not have employed them himself? Many of these technicalities are found to recur in Ben-Sira as often as they recur in the Targum of Koheleth; and yet we are told that Koheleth and Ben-Sira are contemporaries!

"But the date of Daniel is, after all, more important than that of Koheleth; and here the evidence is yet more forcible. The date of Daniel is fixed by modern scholars at 165 B.C., and Ewald, as is well known, finds an allusion in Daniel to Lucius Cornelius Scipio. Ben-Sira certainly wrote no later than 165, and probably a generation earlier; and he now rises from his grave to state that the languages which are distinct in Daniel are in his time mixed. . . . Nay, more, the Chaldee of Ben-Sira is later than Daniel's. . . . If, therefore, language can prove anything, it proves that Daniel was not written in 165." He then gives a list of fifty phrases occurring in Ben-Sira, but unknown, or almost unknown, to the Biblical dialect; and then adds, "This will not exhaust the stock, but if it is not sufficient to prove our thesis, what number will be?"

We may well, then, leave all linguistic difficulties in

Genesis, whether real or supposed, in the hands of experts, and study the book with the conviction that its antiquity and truthfulness are capable of proof far more from the historical matter which it contains than from the character of the language in which it records those events which lie at the very foundation of our Christian faith, and whose reality has been established by the authority of Him Who said, when questioned concerning the lawfulness of divorce, "In the beginning it was not so;" Who verified the narratives of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom, and said of Abraham that he "rejoiced to see His day and was glad."

After the above Introduction had been sent to the press, I happened to meet with an article entitled "The Aramaic Gospel," in *The Expositor*, No. 1, 1891, in which the following passage occurs :—

"The Science of Comparative Philology has made many interesting disclosures as to primitive culture and local origin, by examining what words the members of a class of languages possess in common, and in what they differ. The former denote, of course, the words in common use *before the dispersion;* the latter, the words which each people required to invent or borrow *after* the dispersion."

After giving a list of such words, especially those marking the natural features and geographical position of Palestine, such as "mountain," "hill," "valley," "ravine," "cliff," and "sea-ward," for the west, and "desert-ward," for the south; the writer continues, speaking first of the words marking the points of the compass :—

"The Aramaic of course does not use these words, but designates the east, south, and west by terms which denote

respectively the rising, brilliancy, and setting of the sun. . . . . As we have seen, then, the evidence indicates that the common home of the Hebrew and Aramæan was a great plain, and that it was the Hebrew who emigrated. It is probable that this plain was that of the Euphrates."

It is impossible to determine whether the language of Terah and Abraham resembled most the Hebrew or Aramaic; but the subsequent history of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their very remarkable isolation and exclusiveness, render it probable that their language would be less liable to change than that of other Semites, who mixed more freely with the neighbouring nations, although it would of course require additional words to describe the physical characteristics of the land of their possession, "a land of hills and valleys, that drinketh the water of the rain of heaven," (Deut. xi. 11).

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POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

We cannot read the Book of Genesis without perceiving that the first eleven chapters form a sort of preface or introduction to the main portion of the book, which may be called the family history of Abraham and his descendants, down to the death of Joseph and the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt; and that the latest events recorded in those chapters are separated from the call of Abraham by a vast interval of time.

Neither can we read these eleven introductory chapters without observing that they are naturally divided into sections by the nature of the subjects of which they treat, and by the heading of each section, such as, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth;" "This is the book of the generations of Adam;" the original word being used in a wider sense than that of the English expression "generations." Thus the heading, "These are the generations of Noah," evidently signifies, "This is the whole account of Noah and of the Flood, and of his deliverance from it."

But although these sections are clearly distinct from one another, there is a remarkable unity of purpose in them

all, showing that one mind has either composed them, or selected them and put them together.

An extraordinary amount of time has been wasted by our modern critics in searching out what sentences or parts of sentences were written by the Elohist, and what by the Jehovist,—that is, as it has been explained in the introduction to this edition, by those who use the name Elohim for God, and those who call him Jehovah or THE LORD; as if it mattered in the least from what sources Moses derived his information, so long as it is correct.

Moses, no doubt, did what we expect every historian to do in these days. He examined all existing traditions or documents bearing on his subject; rejected the false and recorded the true, often possibly even in the very words of previous writers. Moses, however, had an advantage which our modern historians have not. He was filled with wisdom and judgment by the Spirit of the God of truth.

It is clear, notwithstanding, that there are marked divisions in these eleven chapters, and that each of these may be regarded as a sort of monograph in itself.

The division of the Bible into chapters and verses has no authority whatever, being a comparatively modern arrangement for the convenience of reference. But their subjects mark out the following as sections of these introductory chapters:—

I. The account of the creation, ending with the third verse of chapter ii.

II. "The book of the generations of the heaven and of the earth," beginning with chapter ii. 4, and ending with chapter iv., and comprising three subdivisions:—

a. The description of Paradise and man's original condition.

b. The account of the temptation and fall of man, and his expulsion from the garden of Eden.

c. The story of Cain and Abel, the genealogy of Cain, and the birth of Seth and Enos.

III. The third division is called "The book of the generations of Adam," and contains little more than a list of names down to the age of Noah, and ends with a very general description of the rapid increase of the human race, their universal corruption, and God's determination to destroy all except Noah and his family by the Flood.

IV. With chapter vi. 9 commences another division, giving a detailed account of the Flood, and ending with the death of Noah.

V. The fifth section is called "The book of the generations of the sons of Noah," and describes the origin of nations, and the cause of their dispersion over the earth. It begins with chapter x. 1, and ends with xi. 9.

VI. The last section of these introductory chapters is the book of "The generations of Shem," and contains little more than a list of some of the direct ancestors of Abraham.

VII. With chapter xi. 27 the principal subject of the history begins, and it is called "The generations of Terah."

The first section, then, contains the account of the creation of the world, and we cannot read it without seeing that the writer affirms that the whole world, if not the whole material universe, was created in six natural days of twenty-four hours each. Was this the case? Did God make all things in six days?

No one who believes in His existence and Almighty power can doubt for a moment that He might have done so even in one day. But the question is not what He might have done, but what He evidently has done. How are we to determine this?

Clearly by examining the work itself. And various causes

during the present century have given us more leisure and better opportunities of thoroughly doing this than men have ever yet had since the world began.

We have in these days carefully and reverently examined the surface of this globe, the work which God made, and we find infallible proofs that it did not come into its present state suddenly, but gradually, and after very many changes of surface, condition, and climate.

The conclusion at which we arrive is as certain as that of a man who digs up the remains of some great city which has been buried under the sand for ages.

Let us suppose that the ignorant tribes in the neighbourhood have a tradition that it was the work of an hour, or that it all came into being in a few days. Our explorer cannot believe this, because his own eyes and his own experience teach him that each brick must have been formed out of the clay by the workman's hands and then burnt in the kiln; that each block of granite must have been taken from the quarry and hewn into its shape by human labour, and that each strange figure upon it must have been invented by man's imagination and graven by the tool in his hand; and therefore that all this work must have occupied some considerable time.

Those who examine the remains of this exhumed city will very probably differ widely from one another in their opinions as to the age when it was first founded, as to the time when various additions were made to the original buildings, or about the meaning and use of some of its details; but they will all certainly agree in rejecting the supposed local tradition that it came suddenly into being without any human labour; they will all be absolutely certain that the whole city was the work of men's hands, and that the materials were brought together and the buildings erected by processes much the same as those which men

adopt for similar purposes in the present day, and which must necessarily occupy time.

Now all educated people in these days who have looked with their own eyes upon the present state of the earth's surface, or who have considered the facts which the researches of geology have brought to light, and have fairly weighed the conclusions which necessarily follow from them, feel equally certain that the old traditional idea that our world was made in six natural days is a misconception.

We are not surprised to find geologists differing widely from one another as to the antiquity of the earth, as to the time and mode in which many of its strata were formed, and as to many other like details of inquiry. These are matters of very little moment compared with the general conclusion at which we have one and all arrived, that the God who made this world did not bring it into its present condition without the employment of secondary causes, or in six natural days of twenty-four hours each.

How, then, are we to interpret this first chapter of Genesis? and what are we to think of the inspiration of the writer and the character of his composition?

First we must try to get a clear idea what we are to understand by inspiration, and then we must carefully examine the writing, and endeavour to determine its character as a composition.

First, then, we must consider carefully what the Bible teaches us upon the general question of its inspiration, from which we shall see what we ought to think about the inspiration of Moses.

Our Lord told His disciples that it is the work of the Spirit to teach His messengers all things—all things, that is, which it is necessary for them to know—and that He does this by guiding them "into all the truth" (St. John xvi. 13). He did not say "all truth," that is, truth of every

kind and upon every subject under the sun, which would mean little less than universal knowledge like His own; but "all the truth,—all that special truth which He came to teach. And to this truth the Spirit is to guide them; and such guiding implies their own co-operation with the Spirit, following the guidance, but using their own natural faculties, and availing themselves of all natural means of acquiring knowledge.

Now we have no reason to think that the inspiration of Moses was more perfect than that of Christ's Apostles; but we may safely assume it to have been the same. We may assume that he was equally guided by the Spirit, but equally required to use his own natural faculties, and avail himself of all the means of acquiring knowledge within his reach. What do we mean, then, by calling the Bible inspired?

We mean that it was written by men whose minds were strengthened and enlightened by the Spirit of God in an unusual and supernatural manner, in order that they might be sure witnesses of the things which they had seen or heard, and infallible exponents of the truths which God commanded them to communicate to men.

There is not a single word in the Bible to warrant the belief that God imparted universal knowledge to any one of His messengers, or that He promised to give them information superior to that of other men of their age on any subjects disconnected with religion. They therefore, of course, always speak of natural phenomena in the popular language of their day.

One faculty, however, and that the most important of all, inspiration invariably gave them: the power to speak the truth.

There is nothing for which the sacred writers are more conspicuous than their fearless love of truth, and simple,

straightforward earnestness in stating what they believe to be true, without fear of blame, love of praise, or respect of persons. It is impossible to read the Bible without feeling persuaded that nothing would have induced its writers to make a wilful mis-statement of facts on any subject whatever, or wilfully to give them a wrong colour from their mode of describing them; though we may at the same time regard it as in no way lessening the value of their message of salvation to admit the possibility of their feeling and speaking as men of like passions with ourselves on indifferent subjects, or on those on which we are not told that God gave them any superhuman information.

Let us try to get some idea of an inspired man, and then we shall see that we may place implicit confidence in him as our guide to heaven, even though he should seem to tell us things about the creation and age of the world or the movements of the heavenly bodies which we know to be inconsistent with proved and universally acknowledged facts.

What, then, do we mean by an inspired man? Not necessarily a man to whom God has given any superhuman knowledge, but one to whom He has imparted superhuman power. To many of the writers of the Bible God gave superhuman knowledge. He told them things which they could not have found out for themselves. But to others He gave no such knowledge, but only superhuman power. And so by inspiration we mean superhuman power imparted to the natural faculties of a man by the Spirit of God.

Besides this, it often happened that God gave His messengers the power of working miracles in His Name, to prove that He had sent them. But we must not confuse this with inspiration, which is clearly a distinct gift, a power imparted by the Spirit of God to the mental faculties of the man.

Let us bear this in mind, then, that inspiration does not necessarily give superhuman knowledge, but superhuman energy, infused by the Spirit of God into the natural mental faculties of a man.

Our Saviour's promise to His Apostles, referred to above, gives us a clear idea of what inspiration must have been.

He told them that the Holy Spirit would give such a superhuman energy to their memory, judgment, and understanding, making their memory so tenacious and accurate, their judgment so clear, and their understanding so enlarged, that they should not only be infallible witnesses to the fact of His Resurrection, but also capable of grasping in all its bearings the message of salvation, of explaining it to others, and of defending themselves by irresistible arguments when brought before kings and rulers for His Name's sake. In fact, that they should be able thoroughly to understand the truth themselves, and to impart it clearly to others.

Can we conceive a higher view of inspiration than this? It raises all the mental faculties of the man to a level more than human, to a level far higher than that which he could reach by becoming merely the mechanical instrument, as it were, of a spirit external to himself, even though it were the Spirit of God.

In what light, then, ought we to regard the spoken or written words of such a man? Surely not as the word of man, but as the word of God. And in this light the Thessalonian Christians received the spoken words of St. Paul, who thus writes to them, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. ii. 13).

Any one who will carefully read the Epistles of St. Paul will see that his words flow quite naturally from the thoughts

of his own mind, and are clearly not dictated to him by any spirit external to his own. But he will also see that those thoughts spring from a mind upon which influences more than human have been brought to bear; that they are the thoughts of one who has been brought closer to God than ordinary men, and filled with a superhuman power of grasping Divine truth by the Spirit of God Himself.

But St. Paul, besides being inspired, was also a man who had received his knowledge of the Gospel by Divine revelation, which is a very different thing from Divine inspiration, and must not be confused in our minds with it.

It is a very common misconception to look upon revelation and inspiration as the same thing. But they are not so. A man might receive information about superhuman truths without being inspired; or, on the other hand, he might be inspired, and yet be left to gain all his knowledge of facts from natural sources of information.

St. Luke, for example, was an inspired man; and yet we have no reason to think that the facts which he records in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles were made known to him by any superhuman revelation. Indeed, he tells us himself that he got his knowledge of them by observation and careful inquiry of other faithful witnesses (St. Luke i. 1–3).

He was inspired—that is to say, his mental faculties, his memory, judgment, and understanding, were raised to a level more than human by the energy of the Holy Spirit, and therefore we can trust him as an infallible witness to the truth of those facts on which our religion is founded. Like Theophilus, when we read his words, we know the certainty of those things in which we have been instructed.

And thus we clear our minds of the common misconception which regards revelation and inspiration as the same thing. In the case of St. Paul we see the results of both

revelation and inspiration; in the case of St. Luke, the results of inspiration alone. St. Paul both received his knowledge of Divine truth from God and also his power of understanding and imparting it. St. Luke gained his information from natural sources, but the Spirit of God helped him to remember, to understand, and to select from the mass of materials before him what to narrate and what to leave unnarrated of the things which he had seen and heard.

We must not leave this subject until we have thoroughly cleared our ideas as to the source from which the actual written words of the Bible come. It is possible that some of them may be the very words which the Spirit of God dictated to the writer; it is possible that Isaiah may have been told to say to the rebellious Jews, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me" (Isa. i. 2); although even here it is far more probable that the prophet, having received by revelation his message, delivers it as the natural outflow of his own inspired imagination. His whole being is so possessed with the Spirit of God, he so completely realises the relation which exists between God and His people, and he so deeply feels the baseness of their ingratitude, that he cannot help speaking as it were in the very person of God. And this will account for the abrupt and otherwise unaccountable changes of person which we find in the more imaginative and enthusiastic outpourings of the inspired writers. They seem quite carried away by the enthusiasm of inspiration, and so to throw their message into a dramatic form, and boldly to introduce God Himself earnestly pleading with His ungrateful people.

But putting aside such cases, we do not find in the more sober historical narratives or in the argumentative and didactic portions of Holy Scripture any traces whatever

of the dictation of words by any one external to the mind of the sacred writer. The words evidently flow freely and naturally from the mind of the writer, the written words in which he makes known to others the thoughts of his own heart. But then that mind, from which these thoughts and words flow just as naturally as they do from any other mind, is not like any other mind. It is the mind of an inspired man. It is a mind whose faculties have been raised above the mere human level, above any level which unaided Nature can reach. From whatever source the man has obtained his information, whether from Divine revelation or natural observation and inquiry, the energy of God's Spirit has so strengthened his memory, cleared his judgment, and enlightened his understanding that he has a grasp of Divine knowledge to which no unaided mind can attain, and an insight as it were into the very mind of God, which only the Spirit of God can give. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received . . . the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 11–13).

It is clear from this passage that however freely and naturally the actual words may flow from the mind of an inspired man, they really express not any human wisdom, but that wisdom which only the Spirit of God can impart to man's understanding, and that therefore we may regard them as indeed the inspired words of God. The words flow freely and naturally from the mind of the writer; but that mind is not in the natural state; it is filled with wisdom by the Spirit of God, and so its thoughts and words are the thoughts and words of God.

Such being the conditions under which the Bible was written, we are not surprised to find in it some traces of the human infirmity or ignorance of the writers; for we have no reason for thinking that they received any information on common subjects beyond that which they could gain by observation and inquiry.

For example, their knowledge of history and chronology must have been obtained by searching diligently amongst the records existing in their day; and of many of the facts with which we are familiar in these days, such as the immense antiquity of the world, the shape, size, weight, and movements of the heavenly bodies, they were probably ignorant. The Omniscient Creator might have given them any amount of information on these or any other subjects of a like kind, but their own writings seem to prove that He did not; and we can see no reason why He should have done so.

There are some facts which men can discover by the use of their unaided faculties, and there are others which, from the very nature of the case, they cannot possibly know unless God tells them. The inspired writers of the Bible give us the results of their own observation and inquiry, and speak of physical facts in the common language of their day, and with absolute truthfulness to the extent of their knowledge. And when God has revealed to them truths which could not be discovered by the unaided human mind, then inspiration enables them sufficiently to comprehend these truths, and to make them known to others in language which we may justly call the inspired word of God.

It is, then, a misconception which places the believer at a great and unnecessary disadvantage in defending the truth that he should think himself bound to show that inspiration gave to the writers of the Bible not only the

power to teach us all necessary truth concerning God and our duty to Him, but also to make us acquainted with the results of modern scientific research.

We do not hold either that God imparted universal knowledge to the sacred writers, or dictated to them by His Omniscient Spirit the words which they wrote.

We have in the Bible, as in the sphere of providence and grace, God and man working together and jointly producing a result. God has stamped upon that result unmistakable marks of Divine Omniscience. We are not surprised to find in it some few traces of the infirmity and ignorance of man.

The great importance of holding just views of inspiration becomes the more apparent when we consider the lamentable consequences which have followed from the common misconception about the absolute infallibility of Scripture upon all subjects.

It has been one of the principal causes of the infidelity which prevails in these days. Many have been brought up from their childhood with the idea that every single word of the Bible was dictated to the writer by the Holy Spirit. More than this, they have been taught that the popular interpretation of the Bible must be true; and this is a far more dangerous error than the first. Half the supposed difficulties of Scripture would disappear if men would carefully examine and find out for themselves the exact meaning of the words of the Bible. But they rarely do this. They regard as the real meaning of Scripture that human interpretation of it with which they have been familiar from their childhood. Increasing knowledge and the discoveries of scientific men prove that interpretation to be inconsistent with well-known and universally acknowledged facts. Thus they are perplexed in mind, and tempted to disbelieve the inspiration of the book which they suppose

to contain such a mis-statement of facts. Some few men, under these circumstances, go to the original, expecting to find there at least the solution of their difficulties. But even this will not always help them unless they first get rid of the erroneous idea that God imparted universal knowledge to the sacred writers, or that His Omniscient Spirit dictated to them the very words which they wrote.

We have no right to look for certain information in the Bible about anything which man can discover by the use of his natural faculties, unless we have reason to believe one of these two things: either that God imparted universal knowledge to His messengers, or that their words were not their own, but the words of the Spirit of Omniscience.

They claim no such knowledge, and it is impossible to read their words without seeing that they flow naturally from their own minds.

Why then should we expect them to speak of the phenomena of Nature in any other than the popular language of their day, or to show a better acquaintance with those phenomena than the men of their own time?

The removal of this misconception should put a stop to all controversy between theologians and men of science. What both want to discover is truth, but not the same kind of truth. The theologian wants to know what God is, His nature and attributes; what is the relation between God and man; what are God's promises and threatenings; what are man's duties, responsibilities, hopes, and fears. With this view he diligently studies the books which he has reason to believe have been written by men inspired by God with power to teach him the truth on all these points. His axioms are the words of the sacred writers, and he is required to prove that his conclusions are fairly drawn from these words.

The scientific man, on the other hand, searches for truth

of an entirely different character. The data from which he draws his conclusions are the existing positive facts of the material universe; and what he wants to know is the nature and constitution of that universe, its present state, its probable history, its elements, laws, and forces.

How comes it, then, that scientific men are so often the antagonists of theologians?

Chiefly because theologians, from a mistaken view of the nature of inspiration, have refused to leave them free to follow out their inquiries to the end. The words of Scripture have, until quite lately, been regarded, sometimes even by men of science, as axioms from which to draw scientific conclusions. And the man who has been compelled by the force of known facts to suggest theories supposed to be inconsistent with the literal words of Scripture has been called an atheist or an infidel, and thereby too often driven to become one.

It is high time that theologians and men of science should make common cause in searching after truth, remembering that truth is not opinion or theory, but that which is objectively true; remembering, also, that any apparent inconsistency between the statements of Scripture and the conclusions of science must arise either from the fact that these conclusions are wrongly drawn, or that the nature of the statements of Scripture and their claims to our assent are misunderstood.

It has been the object of these remarks to prove the latter, and thereby to show that the foundations of our faith cannot be in any way affected by the results of scientific inquiry or the changes of the opinions of men.

What shall we think, then, of the inspiration of Moses? and how shall we account for the circumstance that he has given a more sublime and rational narrative of the creation than any other ancient writer, and yet has made statements

in it which are inconsistent with facts as certain as that St. Paul's Cathedral was not built in six days.

The explanation is easy if we bear in mind the distinction drawn above between revelation and inspiration. Moses was in the highest sense of the word an inspired man; his mind was filled with wisdom by the Spirit of God. He also received many revelations, and he tells us himself that he had more direct communion with God than any other prophet. "If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so: he is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches" (Num. xii. 6–8).

It is conceivable, therefore, as many have supposed, that some dream or vision, or some succession of dreams or visions, may have been seen by Moses, and that this may have been God's method of revealing all that man need know of the origin of the universe.

It is conceivable also that God might have given him direct information about the creation of all things, and, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, we should perhaps naturally infer this from reading his narrative. But there is abundant evidence to the contrary, and he does not say that God told him anything about it.

And if any communication had been made to him in a vision or dream, it is difficult to see why God should have impressed him with the idea that the world was made in six natural days. Why not in six ages? Surely this would have been equally simple and more true. The division into six ages would, of course, have been arbitrary in any case, and artificial, but not more so than the division of the year into seasons, or that of the phases of the moon or the periods of human life.

Then there is not a single word about any such visions or dreams. Nor does Moses tell us that he received any supernatural information at all on the subject. And when we examine the narrative, we see many reasons for thinking that he did not, but that its composition is to be regarded as the product of his own or some other prophet's inspired imagination.

In all other cases he tells us when he received information or direction from God, but he claims no such assistance in the composition or compilation of the Book of Genesis or its introductory chapters.

As an inspired man, however, whose natural faculties by the energy of God's Spirit had been raised above the level of ordinary men, and especially as a profound believer in the One Living God, the Maker and Ruler of all things, he looked upon the natural world with eyes very different from those of the wisest men of Egypt, to say nothing of his less instructed brethren.

The Spirit of God had not given him universal knowledge, but profound wisdom; and his human imagination, and judgment, and powers of observation were quickened to a miraculous extent.

The principal work to which he was called, and for the performance of which he received direct revelations and instructions from the Angel of the Lord, was that of delivering God's people from Egypt, forming them into a nation, and giving them laws and institutions, which should keep them distinct from all other nations, until Christ came to establish the universal kingdom of God.

But it was necessary that he should preface this with just such an amount of information about the origin of the world and man, and the previous dealings of God with him, as would be sufficient to give men worthy views of God and their relation to Him. And so he begins his

work with a description of the creation of the world and of man.

In what form did he give this description? and what is the character of this first section of Genesis regarded simply as a composition? These questions we will endeavour to answer in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

It is impossible to understand the narrative of the creation rightly, whether it was miraculously communicated to Moses by God or was the product of his own inspired, but still human, imagination, without discovering first by a careful examination of its contents what sort of composition it is.

God spoke to our fathers, says the Apostle, by the prophets, by divers portions and in divers manners; which words mean, "with many varying degrees of clearness and in many different ways" (Heb. i. 1). With what amount of clearness and by what manner of composition did He speak through the mouth or the imagination of Moses in his description of the creation of the world?

It was important that man should have some knowledge of the creation of all things, but it was not necessary to reveal to him any of the secondary causes employed in their production. A form of composition, therefore, was adopted admirably suited for this purpose, teaching the truth, but veiled under the symbolic language of a drama. The first chapter of Genesis evidently bears upon its face the character of a sublime drama, requiring therefore to be interpreted like all other similar compositions.

God's great work of creation is so described as to become

a model for man to imitate in his own labours, and with a special view to his need of weekly rest. It is described, too, in language and under figures accommodated to the ignorance and infirmity of man, conveying to him the essential elements of truth through the medium of ideas only partially true, but within the limited range of his own experience.

It is one of the necessities of our condition here that even a divinely inspired teacher can never in this life receive himself or impart to others anything more than a partial knowledge of God and His works. This truth is beautifully expressed by St. Paul to the Corinthian converts. He points out to them that even in attempting to form an estimate of the relative value of charity or Christian love as compared with other virtues, graces, and talents, the mind of both teacher and taught is like that of a little child, or of a man looking at things in a mirror, or as represented to his mind in an enigma, riddle, or allegory. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part." Our knowledge here is partial, and therefore our teaching, though true, is partial also and imperfect—true as far as it goes and as far as we can receive it, but after all only partially true, only the shadow or reflection of the real substance. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." When, in the more perfect state hereafter, we become capable of beholding the substance itself, then the shadow will be no longer of any use to us. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

God treats us here as we treat our children, and as Jesus treated the ignorant of His day, imparting to them the truth as they were able to receive it. The circumstances of the parable are imaginary, but the doctrine it teaches is

true. "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs" or parables (St. John xvi. 25).

When we are children, our attention is attracted by fiction, fables, and allegories; but when we become men, we see their deep inner meaning, and lay aside the fable to grasp more firmly the truth which it contains. "For now we see by means of a mirror in an enigma or riddle, but then face to face." (1 Cor. xiii. 9-12).

Great care is of course required in the application of this principle to the interpretation of Holy Scripture; but we must never forget that the inspired Apostle lays down this principle for us.

Now it stands to reason that, as increasing knowledge and wider experience enable the growing child to see more clearly the unreality of the circumstances of the fable, but to comprehend and appreciate better the reality and vast importance of the truth which it teaches, so the increase of human knowledge, and especially a better acquaintance with the works of God in Nature, must enable us to understand better His words, especially His modes of conveying Divine truth to our minds, and the nature and extent of the supernatural assistance which He has given to His inspired messengers.

The minds of men are not more acute in these days than they were formerly, neither is their judgment naturally less fallible, but they have more opportunities of conferring together, and therefore they have more real knowledge and wider experience to assist their judgment.

The prediction of the prophet Daniel concerning the latter days of the world is being fulfilled. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. xii. 4). Since the world began there never has been a time when the researches and the thoughts of thousands of individual minds have been so brought at once into the common stock

and utilised for the general increase of human knowledge and experience, or when the writings and monuments of former generations of men have been more thoroughly examined and carefully compared together.

We are therefore in a better position than men have ever been before to form an opinion as to the character of a written composition coming down to us from ancient times, whether it be divine or human. A far more exact and extensive knowledge of the works of God must help us to form a much more correct opinion upon the meaning of His words.

Now the drama is a mode of imparting truth which is singularly fascinating to the imagination, instructive to the mind, and exciting to the best feelings of the heart.

In such a composition it is quite possible, as we know from many examples in our own language, for the characters, the scenery, and the transactions to be all real, the persons historical, the scenery truly described, and the actions those which were really performed, and yet the composition to be plainly a drama and not real history.

We are pleased with such a composition if it is truthful. We expect it to be true to Nature. We object to the introduction of a real historical character so represented as to give the reader a wrong impression of him; we object to familiar scenery incorrectly drawn or the representation of actions inconsistent with the known characters of the actors. But so long as he is careful not to err in these points, we allow the freest scope to the imagination of the writer, even when he is dealing with the characters and the transactions of real history.

There can scarcely be a doubt that we have such a composition in the first chapter of Genesis, whether we believe it to have been written at the express suggestion of the Spirit, or, as seems more probable, by one enlightened by the

Spirit with sufficient knowledge, but then left free to follow his own imagination in all matters of detail.

The whole structure of the chapter is dramatic, and strongly marked off from the rest of Genesis by this character. God is introduced as speaking with human voice and giving Hebrew names to night and day, to the firmament, and to land and sea, as taking counsel about the creation of man, and then resting when His work is over.

Our imagination is fascinated with the sublime simplicity of this great drama, and our minds cannot fail to gather from it the deepest and most truthful impressions of the power and wisdom and goodness of God. But we cannot help seeing that in its form it is dramatic, represented in this form expressly for our sakes, in consideration of our infirmity, and for the promotion of our comfort.

The prophet represents in a drama Him, Who ever worketh and sleepeth not, as working for His week and then resting, that man too may alternately work and rest, and also be encouraged to hope for an eternal day of rest hereafter.

Neither is there anything untrue in this statement, that the Great Creator worked for six days and then rested on the seventh. It is true when rightly understood. It is not meant to be taken literally. It is natural that we should take it literally when very ignorant of the nature and immensity of the Creator's works, and of the unmistakable evidences which they contain that He brought our world into its present state gradually and through the operation of secondary causes, which have manifestly occupied a considerable amount of time.

With increasing knowledge we see more clearly that God could not have meant us to take the words of His servant Moses literally, as though He were, like a man, needing rest after His labours. The mere mention of

God's resting ought to be quite enough to suggest to us that He is speaking to us, through Moses, as a father to his young children, telling us the truth, but in language suited to our ignorance, and by means of ideas connected with our own daily experiences.

And what is there untrue in this? In describing the Creator as resting, Moses must have meant pretty much what he said afterwards of the promise made to Noah. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22).

This earth has indeed enjoyed a Sabbath since man first came upon it, and increasing knowledge enables us better to appreciate this.

We know now upon what a marvellously delicate adjustment of natural forces our comfort, and even our very life, depend. We have reason to conjecture that there have been ages when life of any kind was impossible upon this globe. And, for anything we know to the contrary, there may be forces now in operation which may bring back such a state of things again.

The wonder is rather that our globe remains so long habitable. We know very little about volcanoes, but a very slight increase of present volcanic action would destroy every living thing upon the surface of the earth. There are a great number of volcanoes in the world. We have about three thousand earthquakes recorded in history up to the beginning of the present century, and doubtless there must have been very many more of which no record has come down to us. But there have been more than two thousand during the present century, and it is estimated that there are now about sixty earthquakes every year, and one of considerable violence in some part of the earth every eight months.

Surely, then, if it were not that the Great Creator is, in a figurative sense, keeping a day of rest as regards this earth, for the sake of man, we could not live many hours upon it; and who can say, in the face of these facts, that the words of the Christian prophet may not one day prove literally true? "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter iii. 8–10).

When we learn to look at the first chapter of Genesis in this light, there is more reason to be amazed at the amount of positive scientific truth which it contains than to feel disappointed that it does not supply us with axioms from which to start upon some geological inquiry, or support by Divine authority any one of the many theories about the origin of things which have been suggested in these days.

As regards its authenticity, it matters comparatively little whether we believe it to have been written for the first time by Moses in the wilderness, or selected by him from the various then existing traditions with which, as a highly-educated man, he must have been acquainted. At whatever time, by whatever person, or under whatever circumstances it was written, it is manifestly of a highly dramatic character, and is composed with such marvellous skill as to state in the most unmistakable language every great natural truth which has anything to do with man's relation and duties to God as the Great Creator and Ruler of the

universe, and yet to leave every field of scientific inquiry completely open to the freest research, and to abstain altogether from defining the *modus operandi* of Him who made the world.

What are the great truths which it states?

That God made all things visible and invisible, the whole universe, the heaven and the earth, and all things in them. It by no means excludes the use by the Creator of secondary physical causes. It speaks of the earth as employed to bring forth grass; of the sun and moon as ruling over day and night, which must mean putting forth their natural influences during the day and the night, giving light and heat, and, we may also add, producing many chemical changes on the face of the earth.

It speaks of the agency of the earth and the waters in the production of fishes, fowls, and living creatures; it predicts also how in each instance life, once existing, should be continued by inherent powers of reproduction.

Thus the whole field of human inquiry into the operation of secondary physical causes is left completely open. But while thus the theories of modern inquirers are neither affirmed nor denied, causation of every kind and degree is attributed to Him who is thus declared to be the Cause of all causes.

What more have we a right to expect from such a composition? But we have more.

If we once admit the dramatic character of the great week of the Creator's work, we cannot fail to see how truthfully the words of Moses represent the work of that week. The division into six periods is of course an arbitrary division, specially chosen for man's sake. It might as well have been divided into sixty. Let a man sit down to describe the progress and succession of the seasons or the phases of the moon. His description may be equally true to Nature,

whether he divides the year with reference to the changes of its condition and outward appearance into two, four, six, or even twelve periods, and the phases of the moon might as truly be called twenty-seven as four.

Let us imagine, then, some observer to have been watching for millions of years the gradual formation of this world from the hour when it first had a separate existence as a globe up to the time when man came into being upon it; and let him be required to describe the changes of its condition and outward appearance during that vast period of years, not with scientific accuracy or in the technical terms of science, with which we will suppose him wholly unacquainted, but in the common language of men, and according to the outward appearance of things; and let him further be required to classify his facts, and to divide his whole description of them into six periods; and let him still further be required to give his description in the form and character of a dramatic composition.

Does our present knowledge give us any reason to think that such a man's popular description of the original condition, changes, and progressive development of our globe and its inhabitants would have been very different from that of Moses?

Must not such an observer have marked the gradual growth and development of vegetable and animal life, always proceeding from lower to higher organic forms? Could he, so far as we can judge by the light of modern scientific conjecture, have classified phenomena on any much better or more simple and intelligible system than that of Moses?

There are two things here to be considered:—(1.) The facts stated; (2.) The order in which the successive acts of creation are placed.

1. The summary of the facts is singularly lucid, consis-

tent, and exhaustive. We read of no monstrosities, as in most other traditions of the kind; and vegetation and animal life are very briefly, indeed, but clearly distinguished from one another and described.

2. That the order of the days, as well as their number, is arbitrary, seems to be implied by the mention of the sun after the creation of light. This has always been a crux for interpreters of Genesis, long before geology was heard of.

The order of the days is either the true order, or it is not. If it is the true order in which the phenomena of creation would have presented themselves to such an observer as we have supposed, then we must conclude, as many have thought, that the sun was not visible for many ages; that the earth must for a long time have been enveloped in clouds, at first so obscure as to cause total darkness, and then only so far attenuated as to allow the alternations of night and day, and eventually to stimulate the growth of vegetation and low forms of life.

Whether this was the case or not, we have to account for the remarkable statement of the appearance of light before the sun; and the common suggestion of interpreters seems very unsatisfactory.

It is highly improbable, though possible, that light should have been created independently of the sun; that there should have been, as it were, a general agitation of the luminiferous ether, uncaused, as at present, by light-giving centres of energy, and it seems still more improbable that Moses, if he had received no revelation on the subject, and we have no reason to believe that he had, would have described the creation of light and the phenomena of day and night before that of the sun.

If it was his object to place the successive acts of creation in the exact order in which he believed them to have

occurred, it is almost certain that he would have introduced the sun on the first day.

On the whole, it seems reasonable that in such a popular description of creation (even if suggested to Moses by revelation, which is improbable, or coming from his own mind, guided so far as to reject all mythical fancies by the Spirit of Truth), both the number and order of the days should be arbitrary, and should be regarded by us as the framework of the drama, the best means of classifying the works of creation, and producing a lively impression on our minds of the power and wisdom and condescending goodness of God.

Let us, then, imagine Moses, a highly-educated man learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, after a long period of solitary meditation amongst the flocks of his father-in-law and the stirring events of the Exodus, sitting down in his tent in the wilderness to compose this great Drama of Creation.

He has before him a vast amount of materials, the traditions of his Chaldean forefathers, and the speculations and fables of Egyptian mythology.

But he is inspired with the Spirit of Truth, and, like any other educated observer of Nature in these days, he has before his mind all the obvious facts of the existing system of the world.

He meditates upon these, and then he examines all the mythical systems, and sees that they are contradicted by the plainest facts, and are utterly inconsistent with that great truth that there is One Living God, the Maker and Preserver of all things in heaven and earth—the simple creed of his race.

He has recently been commanded to institute the Sabbath, to appoint the seventh day in every week as a day of sacred rest.*

* It seems not improbable that the closing words of the fourth commandment may have been added by Moses to the original table of the

Thus prepared and guided by the Spirit of Truth, the great Lawgiver sits down to write the introduction to Genesis.

His first sentence expresses the very purest monotheism, and lays down the solid foundation of all true religion. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." There is no theogony, no attempt to account for the existence of God, no conjecture of any origin of Him beside Himself. The stamp of Divine truth is thus set upon the very first words of Moses, and every fiction of polytheism is implicitly denied.

His second statement strongly confirms this, and excludes all causes of any of the phenomena of the natural world which have not their origin in God Himself.

It denies the existence of anything from which the present state of things could be evolved without the exertion of

law. 1. Because there is no allusion to the Sabbath either in Genesis, after the second chapter, or in the Book of Job, but every reason to believe that it was first instituted in the wilderness. The Israelites clearly knew nothing about a Sabbath until Moses explained to them the significance of the fact that their gathering of manna on the sixth day was doubled. And Ezekiel speaks of the Sabbath as given in the wilderness as a sign of the covenant (Exod. xvi. 22–26 ; Ezek. xx. 12). 2. Because he rests the duty of keeping the fourth commandment on a totally different ground in the Book of Deuteronomy. The Israelite is there commanded to keep the Sabbath that his man-servant and maid-servant may rest, and not because God had rested. And he is to remember that he was a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord his God had brought him out thence through a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm ; and therefore that the Lord his God commanded him to keep the Sabbath-day (Deut. v. 14, 15). But on the other hand it is not improbable that the division of time into weeks took place very early from the observation of the phases of the moon, and that the seventh day was observed as a day of rest, but that, like other customs incidentally mentioned as existing in the pre-Mosaic ages, it was not as a Sabbath made a matter of religious obligation until the giving of the laws of Sinai.

the power of God. "And the earth was waste and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters."

There is little doubt about the meaning of this word "brooded," and it could scarcely be used, as some suggest, of the wind moving over the surface of the water. Its original signification is to be soft or tender, and it is used of the bird as a loving mother hovering over its young.

Moses meant by this statement not only to exclude all other causes of light and life on the earth, but also to represent them as coming solely from the vivifying power and loving spirit of God, impregnating, as it were, the desolate world with the germs of every kind of life.

And now he has to classify the phenomena of the natural world.

Having attributed the creation of the whole universe to God, and represented His Spirit as vivifying the earth, while yet involved in darkness, covered with water, and wholly destitute of life, he proceeds to unfold the details of the great work.

He introduces the Creater giving His command with human voice, seeing the result to be good, and giving it a Hebrew name.

The order of the successive acts of creation is extremely simple and natural, as well as being exactly suited to the intelligence of those for whom it was intended. I. Night and day. II. The atmosphere spreading over the universal deluge and holding up the dense clouds above it. III The upheaval of the dry land, and consequent gathering together of the seas, and the clothing of the dry land with vegetation of every kind. IV. The dispersion of the clouds and the appearance of the sun and moon and stars in the deep blue abyss of heaven. V. The waters teeming with fishes and the air with birds. VI. The earth filled with

living creatures, and man created to be their ruler in the likeness of God.

The attempt to prove that this was the real order of the successive acts of creation, and to regard this sublime drama as an anticipation of the discoveries of the geologist, is, to say the least, injudicious and wholly unnecessary for the vindication of the veracity or inspiration of the Bible.

And, on the other hand, the objections to this order so often made by scientific men are not seldom merely captious. If they object to this account of the origin of things, we may fairly ask them to show us a better one.

We have a right to ask how Moses, if he was unaided by the Spirit, came to avoid so much error and to reveal so much truth?

Did he learn what God is, and how that, unaided by the idols of Egypt, He made the world and man to dwell upon it, from Pharaoh's daughter or from the Egyptian priests?

Who will believe this who is not wilfully determined to deny the reality of a Divine revelation or the supernatural guidance of the minds of prophets by the Spirit of the God of truth?

The first chapter of Genesis is a sublime drama, which we are bound to interpret as such; but whether it was written and handed down to Moses by some more ancient prophet, or whether, as seems more probable on the whole, it was composed by Moses in the wilderness, it bears upon its very face, when rightly understood, the stamp of truth. As well by the fables which it omits as by the truths which it reveals it proves itself to be the work of one speaking indeed as a man and in accommodation to the ignorance and the necessities of man, but being in reality a prophet of God, a man whose mental faculties had been raised by the Spirit of God to a height which the unaided mind of man can never reach.

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF EDEN.

We have next to consider the story of Eden, a narrative which fascinates our imagination by its freshness, simplicity, and beauty, while it gives us, as in a mirror, a most truthful image of human nature, and the profoundest insight into the secrets of our own hearts.

There are probably few thoughtful men who read the second and third chapters of Genesis without asking themselves some such question as this: Am I reading a narrative of facts which really happened exactly as they are here described? or is this wholly or in part an allegory intended to teach me all I need know of the mysterious origin and nature of man, of his present relation to his Creator, and of his future destiny?

Such a question evidently passed through the mind even of so profound a believer as the poet Wordsworth.

Speaking of man's original goodness and subsequent fall, he writes thus :—

> "He sat and talked
> With winged messengers, who daily brought
> To his small island in the ethereal deep
> Tidings of joy and love.—From these pure heights
> (Whether of actual vision, sensible
> To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
> Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
> Communications spiritually maintained

> And intuitions moral and divine)
> Fell humankind."—*The Excursion*, Book iv.

With such an example before us, we need not feel anxious to determine this question either one way or the other; and we may regard it as wholly unnecessary, for the defence of the Bible as an inspired book, to maintain that every word of the narrative of Eden is to be understood as true in letter as well as in spirit.

Neither is this a new question. It is almost as old as the Bible itself. Both Jewish and Christian writers, profoundest believers in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, have treated the story of Eden as an allegory. Neither have modern discoveries in the slightest degree affected this question, or raised any doubts on the subject which had not suggested themselves again and again to thoughtful men in every age. We need not feel bound, therefore, even to make up our own minds, much less to dogmatise to others, about this story. So long as we accept the profound truths which it teaches as coming to us from the Spirit of God, we may fairly regard it as an open question whether it is a literal narrative or a divine allegory.

There is no reason why the events should not have happened exactly as they are described; but, on the other hand, there is no reason why it should not have pleased God to impart to Moses, or to some previous saint, a knowledge of the profound mysteries of man's origin, fall, and future hopes, by a very beautiful and intelligible allegorical story.

Neither is there any reason why there should not be in this case, as in the account of creation, an intermixture of literal fact with allegorical figure; for this interpenetration of fact and figure is one of the characteristics of the allegory, as distinguished from the parable and the fable. (See "Trench on the Parables," chap. i. pp. 8, 9.)

We shall have a better prospect of understanding this wonderfully interesting story if, divesting our minds as far as possible of all traditional ideas which have gathered round it, we examine carefully the actual words which Moses either wrote himself or received by tradition from his fathers.

One great difficulty is immediately removed by this process—the question of the antiquity of man.

If we confine ourselves to the text of this narrative, we shall not find a single word in it about the time of man's appearance upon the earth.

In the more artistic account of creation given in the previous chapter, man is mentioned last as the most perfect and most important of the works of God in this world; but even there nothing whatever is said about his antiquity; and so far as the narrative of Eden is concerned, the years of man's existence on this earth might be reckoned by millions instead of thousands.

That man was created scarcely six thousand years ago was a natural inference from the genealogies of Moses; but many well-established facts connected with the history even of civilised man render it probable, if not certain, that his antiquity is much greater than this.

There is reason to hope that much light will be thrown upon this subject before long from the labours of explorers in many parts of the world, especially in Assyria and Egypt.

The existence of civilisations of vast antiquity are being discovered in these days, as well as the rude weapons of races not more advanced in the arts than the savages of the present time.

That highly civilised men and rude savages may have existed at the very same time in different parts of the world is obvious from the fact that they do so now, and always

have done in previous historical ages. In our Indian empire at the present time we have men existing in every stage of civilisation, from the half-naked savage of the hills, using flint-headed arrows, up to the highly-cultivated European. Moreover, we are not at all obliged to infer from this that the arrow-heads and bone needles found in geological formations of immense antiquity were made and used by any beings from whom the present human race are descended.

No solid reason can be given why this earth should not have been the home and hunting-ground of many races, more or less human, who have become as extinct as the ichthyosaurus, the pterodactyle, and the mammoth.

Neither, upon the Evolutionist's principles, can it be denied that races scarcely yet sufficiently advanced to be called men may yet have had sufficient intelligence to make and use a piece of flint as a rude weapon.

Some naturalists assume, without a particle of evidence, the former existence of successive races of creatures, ascending gradually in the scale of being, until they reached the platform of him who has weighed the earth, measured its distance from the sun, and estimated the speed of light.

The absurdity of such a supposition will be apparent to most readers, especially when they consider that not a single connecting link has been discovered out of that countless succession of creatures which must have been improved off the face of the earth before the descendants of the noblest ape had become men.

But to return to our narrative, there is not a word in the first four chapters of Genesis about the time of man's creation ; and his knowledge of the arts when first expelled from Eden must have been less than that of those who made the rudest weapons which the geologist has discovered in ancient caves and gravel-beds.

It is, therefore, most important to observe how very little we are told about the original condition of man either before or after his fall.

It would waste our time to attempt an enumeration of the baseless fancies of the human imagination on this subject. It will be more useful to consider exactly what we are told in these chapters of Genesis.

Man's origin, to begin with this, is represented as just the same as that of the other animals. He is made of the dust of the earth, and the breath of animal life is imparted to him. For such is the meaning of the words, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The Hebrew words rendered "living soul" are exactly the same as those used of the other animals in verse 19, and there translated "living creature." We are told, in fact, that man was made an animal, a living creature.

But although his origin is thus described as precisely the same as that of the other animals, he is shown to have faculties vastly superior to theirs.

He is declared to be their ruler, and the narrative implies that he has the power of observing and learning their nature, reflecting upon his own nature, and holding communion with God. He is therefore called God's image or shadow.

Such a being, partly animal and partly divine, having an animal body, but a mind a shadow of that of God, such a being, the possessor of these noble faculties as yet unexercised, is placed by his Maker in a highly favoured position, where he is abundantly supplied with food for his body and objects on which to exercise his understanding.

We are not told, and therefore do not know, how long he remained in this place alone, simply enjoying existence and studying with wondering interest the abundance of vegetable and animal life by which he was surrounded.

But whether it was for a long or a short time, we can scarcely help believing that God during that time held intercourse with him.

If we believe that God has manifested Himself to us, in these latter days, in the Person of His Incarnate Son, it is far easier to believe that He should have in some way manifested Himself by Him Who is called the Angel of Jehovah to man in his first guileless and helpless state of adult infancy.

For such must have been his condition—a state of adult infancy. And this supplies an answer to another modern question of considerable importance.

It is the fashion in these days to deny not only the fact, but even the possibility of a primeval revelation, upon the grounds that such a revelation could not be given until man had arrived by some process of observation and reason at the conception of an Infinite Being, and had also acquired a language in which the nature of that Being and his own relation to Him could be explained.

But why need this new-created man, this adult infant, have either a conception of the Infinite or a language by which to express it in order to receive a revelation and to become acquainted with his Maker?

It is absurd to affirm that He Who made all visible things is incapable of making Himself visible to His creatures.

Our Positivists and others like them will allow us nothing more than eyes and ears to start with upon the ladder of human progress. We ask no more in the present instance, and our narrative gives us nothing more. Adam has eyes and ears, the power of speech, but no language. And this was all he needed to enable him to receive that primeval revelation here described as the foundation of the religion of the world.

"How did man know that there is a God? Because

God told him." This is how the infidel puts it in order to perplex the believer. How could God tell him, he urges, until man had a conception of God, and a language by which to express it?

Our narrative gives us a simple answer. Because he saw Him, and because he heard Him.

All through the Old Testament God is represented as revealing Himself and communicating with men by One Who is called *The* Angel of the Lord, and Who is worshipped as Divine. This was, in truth, none other than the Son of God, that Person of the Trinity Who alone reveals the invisible God, the Word Who was in the beginning with God, Who was God, and Who in the last days was made flesh to dwell with us.

Again it is asked, How could he understand Him without a language? We answer: Our narrative describes the process by which he acquired a language, that is to say, by giving names to the animals and objects by which he was surrounded, a process to which all students of languages trace their origin, and which has left its mark upon them all, and even upon the earliest forms of written speech; every letter of the alphabet having once been the imitation of the form of some animal, implement, or natural object.

It is the fashion to represent religion, and especially the belief in One Supreme Being, the Maker of all things, as something which man has reasoned out for himself. But if this is the case, we have a right to ask why the worship of many gods should have been the practice of all, even the most highly gifted nations, except the Israelites? Why the Israelites themselves should have been preserved with so much difficulty from falling away from the sound teaching of their great lawgiver? and, finally why these chapters of Genesis, the oldest written account of man's ideas on this subject, should teach, in the very purest

possible form, the great truth that there is One Eternal God, the Maker of heaven and earth and of all things in them?

To this we may add the historical fact, brought out by those who have made the religions of the world a special study, that they all, or nearly all, contain evident proofs of an original belief in One God, and show that the belief in many gods is the result of the falling away from a purer form of religious worship; that monotheism has not been evolved from polytheism, but that the latter has come from the gradual corruption of the former.

There is every reason to believe that modern thinkers have been led to adopt these ideas of the evolution of religion, as well as that which we may call the savage theory of man's origin—a theory closely connected with the other—by traditional interpretations of the story of Eden.

This beautifully simple picture of primeval man has been seen by most of us through a glowing and brilliant haze of popular misconceptions which has magnified the images but distorted their proportions and made their outlines less distinct. It demands, therefore, a considerable mental effort to see the picture as it really is. Great fairness of mind and very close attention are required to enable us to look at the picture cleansed from the dust of human fancy, and as described by Moses for our instruction.

What do we see, then, when we sweep away the clouds of man's traditions? We see before us a guileless, helpless, adult infant: literally an infant, for he has no language. What can the advocates of the savage theory of man's origin demand more than this?

We are not told that he has anything more than the instincts of an animal and the reasoning faculties of a man. And as an animal he is more defenceless than almost any other animal which God has made.

There is not one word in our narrative to lead us to suppose that the nature of other animals was in the slightest degree changed by man's sin. We owe this popular misconception to the imagination of poets and painters. And if we would understand man's true condition at his first appearance on the earth, we must altogether dismiss this idea from our minds. Man, even before he sinned, must have been, as an animal, helpless in the presence of the lion or the tiger; and so, had they not been awed, as we are told, by fear of him, he could not have survived long enough to bring reason to his aid to devise means of defence against the wild beasts, which as yet were his only companions.

And this is perhaps one of the strongest arguments against the modern fiction of man's gradual evolution from some form of ape. It is clear that every stage of upward progress from the brute to the man—of which stages, indeed, there are no traces whatever—must have placed him at an ever-increasing disadvantage as regards the means of defence against his companion brutes.

And if, without these intermediate stages, he was born from the very highest form of ape, it must have been by one of those sudden jumps in the progress of things to which our modern naturalists most object, or by a direct and miraculous interference with the order of generative reproduction; by a sort of incarnation of intellect—by a miracle, in fact, far more inconceivable than that so simply described in our narrative, though without any explanation to satisfy our curiosity. "God formed man of the dust of the ground" (as He did all the other animals), "and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living creature."

And now let us try to look steadily at this guileless, helpless, adult infant.

He is placed in a highly favoured spot. It is reasonable to suppose that the Creator would place the first solitary man in the midst of favourable surroundings, with abundance of food, attainable with little labour. And such a spot, we are told, was the home of the first man.

Let us consider well this fair creature in his delightful home, as he stands before us fresh from the forming hands of his Creator, with all the guileless innocence of a child, but with the stature and intellect of a man.

He has instincts, intuitions, and faculties, in addition to the five senses; but at present he has absolutely no acquired knowledge. He is surrounded by countless objects which delight his senses, excite his wonder, and prompt at once inquiry into their nature. From them he cannot help at once beginning to acquire knowledge and to form language. He sees his own image reflected in the smooth surface of the water, and observes at once that he differs in form, as well as in faculties, from all other creatures near him. He sees, he hears, he handles, he smells, he tastes. He observes, he reflects, he reasons on all things around him; and he can no more help doing this than the fish can help swimming or the bird flying. Neither can he help giving names to express the likeness or difference which he observes in objects. Even if he has no companion to whom he may utter them aloud, the connection of thought and speech is so intimate, that he must by a necessity of his nature frame names in his mind and utter them sometimes to himself.

That this is natural to man as man—as natural as it is to the ox to low or to the nightingale to sing—we may be sure from what we constantly see in very young children. They frequently give names to objects utterly different from anything they have heard, and clearly derived from some imitation of a sound or strange association of ideas

passing through their minds at the time; and they often utter them aloud to themselves when they think they are alone.

But if we adhere closely to our narrative, we shall see that Adam was not alone. His Maker condescends to be his instructor. He whose special office it is to reveal the Invisible, He, Who is the only One Person by whom the Triune God can be brought under the observation of the human senses, shows Himself to Adam, and is necessarily and at once perceived by him to be a Being glorious, powerful, and in all things superior to himself.

This is a primeval revelation, simple and intelligible to all who believe in Christ. Adam has no conception of the Infinite, no name for God, no idea of God; but he has eyes and ears. He sees and he worships; he hears and he learns by hearing.

How long does it take a child to learn to speak so as to be understood? At least two years, for during half that time the mind is undeveloped and the organs of speech are imperfect. Would it be as many weeks if he had the mind and the mouth of a full-grown man?

We have no means of testing this; but it requires no great stretch of the imagination to fancy that Adam must have been an apt pupil of his Divine Instructor.

And it is difficult to see why it should be more hard to believe that the Son of God should condescend to be his Instructor than that He should dwell with men as man for more than thirty years; and even after His resurrection from the dead should show Himself to His Apostles from time to time during forty days, and speak with them of the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts i. 8).

Neither, if we look again to our narrative, could he have been long without a companion, whom he might live with, and with whom he might learn to converse. We are not

told how long Adam remained alone; but our narrative seems to imply that Eve was not created until Adam had learned to give names to the animals and objects in his garden; in fact, until he had had time to form the elements of language. Then comes the account of the creation of Eve.

The facts of creation are very clearly stated in this second chapter of Genesis, but the account of it is not intended to contradict that of the first. This second chapter of Genesis does not profess to be a detailed account of the whole creation, which has been given already in the first. But its sole object is to describe more fully the creation and original condition of man.

Several things mentioned in the previous chapter require to be made more clear when our attention is specially directed to man.

We might erroneously suppose that man's origin was altogether different from that of other animals when we read, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And so we are at once told that man was formed, like the animals, out of the dust of the ground, and became a living creature.

And then the mysterious saying, "in our image, after our likeness," requires expanding and explaining. And so it is shown to consist in something higher than mere dominion over the other animals, in the more lofty but more perilous condition of moral freedom, the knowledge of good and evil, and the free choice between them.

And next, the same mention of the image of God must have suggested this question without solving it: Is this God-like creature to perish and come to nothing, like the brutes beneath him? Our narrative answers this question, and implies his immortality by threatening death only as the punishment of sin.

There remains yet a further interesting question to which our narrative gives the answer.

Why this emphatic mention of sexual difference in man alone of all the creatures of the earth? Perhaps few readers, though they may know the first chapter of Genesis by heart, have observed how the difference of sex is emphasised in the case of man by being mentioned only of him. It is implied of others in the words of blessing, "be fruitful and multiply;" but it is mentioned distinctly only of man both here and in chap. v. 2: "Male and female created He them."

Our narrative explains all this. Woman was to be more to man than the mere bearer and nurse of his children. Even in Paradise it was not good for him to be alone; she was to be a companion and a help-meet for him; one who should share his joys and enter into his thoughts; whose form should delight his eyes, and whose voice should be as music in his ears. And further, unlike all the other creatures of the earth, she was to be his even to the very end of his earthly life, so that it should be an ordinance of Nature for ever that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and that they should become as one flesh.

And so the creation of woman is made a matter of primary importance in our narrative, and we are distinctly told that she was derived from man.

We need not insist upon the literal interpretation of this beautiful passage. The story is so simple and natural that we can scarcely help believing that something very much like it may have actually taken place. He who formed man from the dust of the ground may easily be supposed to have formed woman out of the substance of man. But God never allows His creative acts to be seen in their first stages. He does not work, like man, with visible hands,

but with the hidden hands of creative energies. And our narrative, therefore, would seem to suggest, if it is not altogether allegorical, that the deep mystery of Eve's derivation from his own living substance was communicated to Adam by a vivid dream during his sleep. His exclamation on awaking is extremely natural: "This time it is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman (Ishah), because she was taken from man (Ish)." The deduction which follows is of course the reflection of the sacred writer, and is not to be considered as part of the exclamation of Adam: "Therefore a man leaveth his father and his mother, and cleaveth unto his wife, that they may become as one flesh."

How touching are the closing words of the chapter when read by us, the children of shame! "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed."

How true to nature, whether the story is an allegory or a literal narrative! There can be no shame until there is a consciousness of committed evil or of an inherent tendency to commit it.

The angels of heaven have the knowledge of evil, but we cannot believe them to have any experience of shame; for we only feel shame when we are conscious of tendencies to evil of which we are ashamed, or of the actual commission of shameful deeds. The uncorrupted children even of fallen man will for many years give us no faint picture of the garden of Eden, while they stand together, male and female, naked but not ashamed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FALL OF MAN.

THE third chapter of Genesis reveals to us the nature and origin of sin; the rest of the Bible its rapid development, its punishments, and its remedies. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth." The passage is very short, and very terrible in the narrative, from the eating a forbidden fruit to the crime of murder.

Surely the first men of Genesis are savage enough, and, if we will only confine ourselves to the words of the Bible, ignorant and helpless enough, to satisfy any theory of human progress from "utter barbarism" to the civilised life of the nineteenth century.

But if we will carefully confine ourselves to the language of the Bible, we shall find that it gives us an account of man's original state, which, while it answers all the requirements of the modern theories of progress, contradicts at the same time the false conclusions as to his primitive intellectual and moral condition which have been drawn from them.

But we must not only confine ourselves to the actual words of the Bible; we must also bear in mind, while we are studying them, certain well-established truths connected with the nature, condition, and tendencies of mankind in all ages.

1. All known facts, as distinguished from theories, go to

prove, almost to demonstration, that man has always been man, as he is now, neither more nor less; that, if we set aside all consideration of acquired knowledge, he has always been precisely what he is now, an animal with intellectual powers, the faculty of speech, and a moral nature. All history bears witness to this truth, and all pre-historic traces of his existence and of his works confirm it. The most ancient man who, without any inherited knowledge, first made a bow and arrows or constructed a hut made of the branches of trees cut down by his stone-hatchet, showed little less ingenuity and skill than the architect of St. Paul's or the inventor of the steam-engine.

And we may fairly regard it as no slight evidence of the inspiration of the Bible that its authors should have kept so clear of all the strange fancies of other writers, both ancient and modern, on this subject. Man is always man, just as we know him now, from the beginning to the end of the Bible. He is neither bigger nor smaller, stronger nor weaker, more or less clever, more or less good or evil, than we know him in this nineteenth century.

The expression, "There were giants in the earth in those days" (Gen. vi. 4), does not at all imply that they were bigger than other men, but abandoned, violent, or, as expressed in the latter part of the verse, "mighty men," "men of renown." The word *nephilim*, rendered giants, comes from *naphal*, to fall, and so will signify either "fallen ones," abandoned men, or possibly "violent ones," who fall upon others. But whatever the word may mean, it has not any necessary connection with size of body.

2. Then it is absolutely certain that man has a tendency to change for the better or for the worse, physically, intellectually, and morally, according to his surroundings and his own individual exercise of free-will. And this is not a contradiction of what we have just stated, for this change

is not found to affect to any great extent his essential nature, but to be due only to his acquired habits of life, thought, and action.

No amount of degradation can bring man down to the intellectual level of the brute, or to a condition from which he and his children may not be raised again to a more civilised state. And, on the other hand, no amount of civilisation can save his descendants from sinking down rapidly to the condition of the savage, if they are removed from all the surroundings and helps of civilised life, and placed in a position where all their energies can scarcely provide them with food for their hunger and shelter from the cold.

3. To these two facts we must add yet another, which seems to be pretty clearly established by many proofs in these days.

There can be little doubt that not only natural diseases but also evil moral tendencies are inherited. The natural law emphasised in the second commandment seems true to Nature in more senses than one; and although, as regards its eternal consequences, it must of course be confined to those who persist in the sins of their fathers and make no attempt to resist evil by the promised aid of God's Spirit, it is nevertheless a law of the Creator that the sin of the fathers should affect their children.

With these known truths before our minds, let us consider the Scriptural account of the fall of man and its consequences.

Adam and Eve are together in the garden, as yet ignorant of evil, and therefore as free from any sense of shame as the young child which stands naked before its parents in the nursery.

The child feels no shame because it is utterly unconscious of anything of which it ought to be ashamed. And

this state of guileless innocence remains for a very considerable time if the child's imagination is unpolluted by contact with other less innocent minds.

What is the cause of this absence of shame in a child? It cannot be due merely to the fact that the child's constitution is not fully developed; for premature knowledge will at once cause premature shame, even if it does not cause premature crime; and, moreover, we cannot observe any feeling of shame from a consciousness of being naked in any animal below man, however highly organised.

Besides this, we must remember that shame arises not only from a consciousness of impurity, but from a sense of guilt of any kind. The child who has been untruthful, dishonest, or spiteful, naturally feels shame because it is convicted by its own conscience of having said, done, or felt that of which it ought to be ashamed.

Closely connected with this sense of shame arises the natural fear of discovery and of punishment. But these two feelings must not be confused with one another, for they are quite distinct. Fear and shame are both the natural and necessary punishments of sin, but they spring from different sources. Shame and its companion, remorse, come from within, from the man's own condemnation of his own conduct, irrespective of any thought of a lawgiver. Fear arises from the anticipation of punishment from another without, whether it be the censure of his fellow-man or of the Supreme Lawgiver.

A great deal of time is often wasted in arguing for or against the existence of an instinctive moral sense in man.

Does not the account of the first sin and its consequent fear and shame plainly teach us that conscience is simply one of the necessary functions of reason?

Conscience—which means self-knowledge—is the name we give to the necessary operation of the mind of a being

who has the power of reflecting upon his own nature and conduct; and such a reasoning creature can no more help forming a judgment upon the character of his own acts and feelings than he can avoid distinguishing by his senses between light and darkness or between sweet and bitter.

The Latin words "Mens conscia recti" or "Mens conscia probri" well express this truth. Conscience is "the mind aware of right or wrong," distinguishing between the two and judging of the fitness or unfitness of each.

And this leaves room, of course, for any amount of enlightenment of the mind by moral training in the way of righteousness or that darkening of the understanding which is one of the most terrible consequences of the indulgence in wilful sin, so that a man learns at last to "call evil good, and good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. v. 20).

The reader is particularly requested to bear in mind this explanation of the obvious meaning of conscience, for it will enable him not only to understand better this narrative, but also to see how groundless are many of the modern fictions about the gradual growth of the moral sense.

"The light of the body is the eye," says our Lord, meaning not the bodily eye, but the keen moral eyesight of reason, which, when unclouded by moral depravity, can no more help judging truly of the fitness or the unfitness of the reasoning being's own actions and feelings, than his eye can help distinguishing between light and darkness. This moral eyesight is never so keen as in the case of uncorrupted children; for it is as natural a part of man as his bodily eye, and, like it, can be trained to greater accuracy of judgment, or injured by misuse or neglect.

What we do know of conscience is, that it can be overclouded for a time, but never destroyed. It is the judge

within us who, when the time comes, will acquit or condemn, will punish or reward us, however much we may disregard his warnings or seem to stifle his voice.

This is the teaching of St. Paul, who, on this very ground, shows that the Gentiles cannot be acquitted of the charge of wilful sin because they have not the light of a revealed law like the Jews. "When the Gentiles, which have no law, do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience (lit. self-knowledge) bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts (lit. reasonings) one with another accusing or else excusing them" (Rom. ii. 14, 15).

This moral eyesight, then, must have been singularly keen in the case of Adam and Eve, although at first it discovered in themselves no thought, desire, or action unsuited to their own nature or to their natural relation to Him who revealed Himself to them as their Master and their Friend.

As yet sinless, they feel no shame, simply because their reason tells them of no act or feeling of which they need be ashamed.

And now, what are we to think of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, of the tree of life, of the speaking serpent, of the expulsion from the garden, and of the cherubim with the flaming sword, or sword-like flame, guarding the way of the tree of life? Are these parts of the literal narrative, or allegorical symbols introduced to illustrate the truths which that narrative is intended to teach?

There is no reason why we should determine these questions either way; for the whole might be allegorical, as already observed, without in the slightest degree affecting the question of the inspiration of the Bible.

The inspiration of the sacred writer is proved by the pro-

foundness of the truth which he reveals, and the miraculous manner in which he avoids all the false theories and nonsensical fancies of other ancient writers.

Adam and Eve stand before us in this story, a man and woman exactly like ourselves, and whom we need not be ashamed to own and to honour as the parents of our race.

The law which was given to them was, in all essential points, precisely the same as that which we have as our guide in the Ten Commandments. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 16, 17).

Man must honour the Lawgiver by perfect obedience, but every creature of God may be freely enjoyed except when and where He, for the wisest reasons, has forbidden its use.

Although we may not dogmatise about this story one way or the other, we have a full right to claim that freedom which we allow to others.

If others regard it as allegorical, and we allow them to do so, we may ourselves fairly claim the privilege of considering it, at any rate in most parts, a simple and literal narrative of events which happened exactly as they are here described.

The account of these two trees seems extremely natural, and singularly consistent with the rest of the narrative.

Such a simple command is admirably suited to the infantine condition of our new-created parents.

They are utterly without any knowledge except that which they have acquired by observing the objects around them in the little world of their Paradise.

They have only just formed the rudest elements of lan-

guage, sufficient to enable them to understand one another in their very limited sphere of action and enjoyment, and their religion is confined to the knowledge of Him who has from time to time held visible communion with them.

They are not modern philosophers of the nineteenth century, and therefore have no sublime conceptions of the Infinite; but they have a far better and more simple religion, and find no intellectual difficulty whatever in recognising in Him Who visits them in their garden the visible Revealer of the Being who made them, and Whom they feel that it is reasonable and natural for them to love, to worship, and to obey.

What can be more natural than that an easy and simple command should be given to these guileless creatures to test their love and to train them for the safe enjoyment of moral freedom.

They are supplied with everything they need. Food for the body is abundant on all sides; and they have an occupation which is found to give the greatest pleasure to many of their descendants, that of watching and tending the growth of trees and flowers, and of the fruits of their Paradise.

Regarding the tree of life and its fellow as literal trees in the midst of the garden, we are not to suppose them possessed of properties different from any of the other trees.

The tree of life must have had what we should call now a sacramental character, having no miraculous virtue or life-giving power inherent in it, but being simply the appointed symbol or pledge of God's promise of immortality.

We may compare it to the rainbow, which was selected out of the other existing phenomena connected with light to be the appointed token to the descendants of Noah of God's promise not to disturb again the ordinary course of

Nature by a deluge. Or we may compare it to the water of Baptism, or the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, which, without undergoing any material change or acquiring any miraculous properties, become by the words of consecration the symbols of the Spirit of God and of the Body and Blood of Christ, and so the tests of our own faith, and the pledges of God's promise to pardon our sins and to give us eternal life.

We may easily imagine the reverential awe with which Adam and Eve must have approached this sacred spot in the midst of the garden.

The fruit of only one of the trees was forbidden, so that they must have eaten as freely of the Tree of Life as of any other.

The act of eating pledged God to support their life; and therefore, when they had broken God's laws, they were to be prevented from partaking any longer of this pledge of life. God's word of promise could not be broken, and therefore He withheld from them, when they had disobeyed Him, the visible pledge of that promise. And this was not to be restored until sin had been conquered, as we have it explained to us in that glorious allegory which unseals so many of the mysteries of the ancient Scriptures: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7).

As the tree of life was the pledge of immortality, so the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was simply the test of man's obedience and love. And it was God's command which made it so, and not, we may be sure, any unusual property inherent in the tree itself.

And now, before we consider how innocence was lost, and sin and death introduced into the world, we must face the great question of moral freedom, and see what it means.

This simple story, whether we regard it as a literal

narrative or as an allegory, throws more light upon the perplexing subject of moral freedom than all the books of all the philosophers of the world—no slight proof of the inspiration of the writer.

It enables us to distinguish clearly between negative and positive virtue. The first chapter of Genesis, as we have already observed, tells us that man was made in God's image. The third chapter explains the full meaning of that expression. "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. iii. 22).

It is clear from this that man's likeness to God was not to consist only in dominion over the world, in negative virtue, or in a state of guileless innocence, due merely to ignorance and the absence of temptation. It was his high destiny to be God-like in knowledge and in the deliberate choice of good, that is, of all which is most consistent with his God-like nature.

There is no difficulty in distinguishing between negative and positive goodness, because precisely the same moral process which went on in the case of Adam and Eve goes on now in all their children, especially when they come into the world under favourable circumstances and in the midst of virtuous surroundings.

How delightful it is to contemplate the guileless innocence, the delicate conscience, the keen moral eyesight of a well-disposed child. Yet how sad to feel that all this is mere negative and untried goodness, and that a few days or weeks of contact with evil companions may be enough to change it all.

Then comes the struggle for victory, the battle for life or death, the attainment of positive virtue, or the settling down into moral darkness, irretrievable ruin, and hopeless slavery to the lower nature and to the spiritual enemy of the soul.

Now we cannot believe that man was meant to be kept long in this first moral state of negative goodness. It was his destiny to be made like God by becoming acquainted with good and evil and by deliberately choosing the good.

The origin of evil is profoundly mysterious, but we know enough about it to feel certain that its immediate cause is the abuse of moral freedom; and we may therefore feel also tolerably certain that every intelligent being in the universe who has reached a state in which he can enjoy moral freedom with safety has passed through some sufficient moral trial, and so learned to deliberately choose good instead of evil.

This does not involve any necessity of a fall from virtue. We do not know who first introduced evil into the moral universe or why God permitted it, but we know only too well that it exists, and we can see some of its uses.

So far as this world of ours is concerned, and we need not trouble ourselves about any other, we can see one of the great uses of evil. It makes this world a place of moral training, a battle-field of virtue, where by the aid of God we may reach positive goodness by overcoming evil.

Now, although our surroundings and inherited moral weakness involve the necessity of many defeats before final victory is reached, there cannot be any necessity that this should be the case with all moral beings.

No sufficient reason, therefore, can be imagined why Adam and Eve should not have resisted the temptation to break this law of God. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17).

How long they would have remained in this state if they had resisted temptation, or to what further temptations, if any, they would have been exposed as their knowledge and

moral strength advanced, or by what means God would have eventually given them, still unfallen, that knowledge of good and evil which must have been in some way acquired even by the angels of heaven, we cannot possibly tell.

But one thing is quite clear, that their sin consisted in the endeavour, through want of faith and patience, to shorten the period of their moral training. They could not wait God's time. They wanted to reach the goal by a short but forbidden path. They could not understand God's plan, and chafed under His discipline. The immediate incentives to their crime were sensual desire, pride, and ambition, and the suggestion to commit it came into their minds from without.

And this brings us to the part which is attributed to the serpent in our narrative.

We may regard it as a matter of perfect indifference whether this was a real serpent, or the Evil Spirit in the form of a serpent, or merely an allegorical symbol used by the writer for the spirit of evil, as in the allegory of the Apocalypse.

The great truth which the narrative teaches is this, that the temptation came from without before it began within: that the sensual desire, the pride, and the ambition of Eve were kindled by the permitted suggestion of the Evil Spirit, and those of Adam by the persuasion of Eve.

It is the fashion in these days to deny the existence of a personal Evil Spirit, the tempter of man; and there is good reason to believe that the denial by men of his own existence is a fresh evidence of his great power to deceive the human mind. As it has been quaintly observed, the Devil, having failed to mislead men to their ruin in other ways, is at last "shamming dead;" and it is consistent with this that he has reproduced in these days, and dressed up

in a more modern form, the old original falsehood, "Ye shall not surely die."

But whatever may be the difficulties of believing that God would allow the existence of evil spirits, and still more that He should permit them to suggest evil to the mind of man and have power to deceive him, nothing can be more plainly revealed in Holy Scripture; and, like the existence of God, it is rather taken for granted than proved.

Moses does not begin the Bible by saying that there is a God, or by proving His existence, but assuming it at once, he says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And so, assuming the existence of the Evil Spirit, he speaks of him as suggesting the first sin to the mind of Eve.

For it is certain that he cannot mean that the serpent, simply as a serpent, was man's tempter. If it is literally true that the serpent did speak to Eve with human voice, a miracle must have been permitted for a great moral purpose. If otherwise, then we must consider that the writer teaches us in this symbolical language how the Devil suggested to Eve the arguments which induced her to transgress the law, and how she attempted to excuse herself afterwards by attributing her sin to those suggestions.

But in whatever way we look at it, the account of the temptation is most true to Nature, and most instructive.

We need not suppose that the forbidden tree was literally called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the first instance. And so, when Eve speaks of it in the third chapter, she calls it simply "the tree which is in the midst of the garden."

The suggestion of the Evil Spirit that the eating its fruit would give knowledge is the cause of its mysterious name.

The temptation begins by a question suggesting hard thoughts of God and exaggerating the stringency of His

law. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" "Is it really true that God hath surrounded you with all these delicious fruits and forbidden you to eat of them?"

This was not true; and the suggester of the question knew it was a lie. He knew that God had given man all His creatures richly to enjoy. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat."

But although it was a lie, although Eve also knew it was a lie, it had its intended effect upon her mind. She hastens to contradict the slanderous suggestion with indignation. Yet it has done its work. It has brought powerfully before her imagination the one prohibition. "True, God has allowed me all these enjoyments, but why is that mysterious one forbidden?"

This feeling shows itself in her answer, for she exaggerates the law herself; she adds to the command that which God had not added, "Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." She evidently had felt Satan's taunt. "What a miserable state of ignorance you are placed in here! Why should God forbid you anything which can add to your knowledge or enjoyment of life?" "We may eat of the fruit of the garden," she answers. "You are wrong there; we are not treated so unreasonably as you suppose; but," she continues, "of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

The tempter is encouraged by the evident effect of his first suggestion, and proceeds at once to give God the lie, and to suggest unworthy motives for His command.

"The threatened punishment is a mere scarecrow to keep you in a state of ignorance and dependence. You will not die, but become like a god." "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof,

then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Sensuality, pride, and ambition have been set to work unchecked; the actual sin necessarily and speedily follows. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (iii. 6).

We are not told by what arguments Adam was persuaded, neither is there in this simple narrative any description of the painful scene which presented itself to the imagination of the author of the "Paradise Lost;" yet the words "gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat," seem to justify his touching lines:—

> "She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
> With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,
> Against his better knowledge: not deceived,
> But fondly overcome by female charm."
>
> —*Paradise Lost*, ix. 996.

And his sin is in our narrative distinctly attributed to the persuasion of Eve: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife" (iii. 17). Such, too, is the judgment of St. Paul: "Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Tim. ii. 14).

Thus the reins were given to sensual appetite, intellectual pride, and worldly ambition. A terrible sense of nakedness, shame, remorse, and terror were the natural and necessary result. But there is little willingness to bear the blame or to acknowledge themselves without excuse. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." "The woman, whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did

eat." The sin which could not possibly have been committed without the free consent of the human will is thrown back upon the woman who persuaded, the Evil Spirit who deceived, and finally upon God Himself, Who gave the woman and permitted the temptation.

Temptation is not the cause of sin, but is absolutely necessary for the training of all endowed with the priceless gift of moral freedom.

There was no real reason why Adam should have fallen, even when Eve allowed herself to be deceived. The true state of the case is well summed up in the inspired words of the Apostle: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (St. James i. 12–15).

Neither is there a word in the Bible to lead us to believe that if Adam and Eve had not fallen their children would not have done so. The existence of sin in the world is a fact which we know without the Bible. We know that every human being is so morally weak that he begins to sin as soon as he is old enough to know the difference between good and evil. The Bible tells us that we inherit this moral weakness as the natural consequence of the wilful sin of our first parents, and of all who have been naturally born from them. Our own personal guilt begins when our own will consents to sin.

The expulsion from Paradise and the loss of the pledge of immortality follow, but not without the promise of final victory over him whose deception has caused this moral

ruin. Woman is to suffer; man is to labour; but One born of woman is to destroy the power of the tempter by suffering. A Champion is to come in God's time, to crush with bleeding heel the serpent's head.

Whether the rest of the narrative is allegorical or not, there is clearly allegory here, as clearly as in that strange scene which presented itself before the entranced eyes of the prophet in Patmos, when he saw under the image of a war in heaven the struggle of Christ with Satan for the salvation of His brethren, and heard, when it was over, "A loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death" (Rev. xii. 7–11).

CHAPTER V.

THE EXPULSION FROM EDEN.

The immediate punishment of the sin of Adam and Eve was their expulsion from Paradise, with all which that implied. The lot of woman was to be a hard one; her travail pains were to be increased, her subjection to her husband to be more complete; though, as a compensation, she was to be the mother of the Future Deliverer.

Man was no longer to find himself provided with all he needed by the bounty of Nature, but he was to be driven into a less hospitable region and left to his own resources.

And now let us try to realise the utter helplessness of the banished ones.

They have fled in terror far from their early home, and they find themselves unprotected in the midst of dangers and difficulties hitherto unexperienced.

Under such circumstances it seems scarcely possible that they could have escaped destruction from famine and exposure, or from the attacks of fierce wild beasts, without the aid of Divine Providence.

No doubt the part of the world they were in, though not like Paradise, was one in which it was possible for them to exist more easily than in many others into which their descendants were afterwards driven, when the population of the earth increased.

They had a warm climate and a fertile soil yielding food

in return for very little and very rude cultivation; and there must have been many natural productions on which a single pair might manage to support life, at any rate for a time, and until stern necessity had taught them how to improve these productions by the labours of their hands.

But for some years, at least, they must have had to endure the most fearful hardships and to suffer severe privations. The narrative gives us no exaggerated account of their miseries. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, . . . in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread" (iii. 17).

No change has passed over the earth itself. It still yields, uncultivated, an abundant supply of food for every other animal except man. "These all wait upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand; they are filled with good" (Ps. civ. 27, 28). These "toil not, neither do they spin;" it is man alone, of the inhabitants of the earth, the head and ruler of all, he alone it is who day by day "goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening."

We are apt to forget this significant fact that Nature refuses to man alone the fruits of the earth which he needs without labour. The very thorns and thistles which give him so much trouble supply food in abundance for the fowls of the air.

Why should he, the lord of all, be doomed to this incessant round of labour? And still further, why is it that no progress in that which is commonly called civilisation should bring him very much relief? Why, on the contrary, should material advancement be so often attended, except in the case of a few favoured ones, by increasing severity of toil and more intense human suffering?

The answer is obvious. Toil and suffering are the natural consequences, and so the ordained punishments of sin—a fact which is proved by the universal experience of mankind: for where sin most abounds, there toil and suffering are most abundant also; where communities are less selfish and more God-fearing, there there is less poverty and less anxious toil. "I have been young, and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread" (Ps. xxxvii. 25).

But to return to Adam and Eve; what more helpless condition can the advocates of the savage-theory of man's origin demand? Who can conceive a state of more abject misery than that of our first parents in their place of banishment? All sorts of fanciful traditions exist about them; but let us confine ourselves to the actual statements of Scripture and the facts which may naturally be inferred from them.

They want food, clothing, shelter, and protection possibly from the attacks of wild beasts. The latter danger we need not consider perhaps at present. Providence may have guided them to a part of the country not infested by wild beasts of a formidable kind, or these animals may have been so well provided with prey as not to be driven by hunger to attack the defenceless pair; but food and clothing they must have and some kind of shelter.

What knowledge had they of the means of obtaining these? Their experience in Paradise may have given them some elementary notions about the cultivation of the natural productions of the soil; reason and awakened shame had suggested to them the use of leaves for clothing; and either the actual teaching of the Angel of the Lord or natural intuition had enabled them to substitute for these the skins of animals.

We have a right to insist upon these facts when men

come forward with theories about the origin and early condition of man which they conceive to be inconsistent with the statements of Holy Scripture. We maintain that the statements of Scripture imply a more helpless condition of the first man and woman than can well be imagined—helpless, that is to say, as regards the knowledge of the arts or of the rudest beginnings of civilisation. Their clothing is the skin of animals; their food, whatever they can find upon the trees or on the ground; their shelter, the nearest cave or the branches of the trees. And since their banishment from Paradise was a punishment for a base and ungrateful act of disobedience, we have no reason to suppose that God would give them any assistance by teaching them how to supply their natural wants, but would leave them to the unassisted guidance of their natural reason.

As regards the supply of their natural wants, therefore, and all the mechanical arts, Adam and Eve must have been more helpless than the most degraded savage that can be found in the forests of Australia or amid the icebergs of the Arctic Ocean. At least we have no right to infer otherwise from anything which is stated in Scripture.

But in no other respect were they in the smallest degree like savages. That which we commonly understand by the savage state, that state of utter barbarism in which we find some races of men in remote and inhospitable regions even in these days, is not in the slightest degree like that of the Adam and Eve of Genesis. In many respects such savages are far better off than Adam and Eve could have been at first. They know much better how to provide themselves with food, clothing, and shelter, and how to defend themselves against the wild beasts.

Put a highly educated man and woman of the upper classes of society in the backwoods of America with nothing but the clothes on their backs. What would become of

them? They would soon die of hunger and cold unless some Red Indian should come across them and supply them with food and shelter.

The Red Indian is at home in the forest, and his wigwam is well supplied with all he needs; but in intellect, religion, and morals he will contrast unfavourably with the refined and educated pair.

It is recorded of three great poets, that when they had finished a picnic and wished to reharness their horse, neither of them could imagine how the collar could be put over the horse's head until they had taken counsel with a ploughman in a neighbouring field.

There is, in fact, no necessary connection between the intellectual, moral, and religious condition of a man and his knowledge of the mechanical arts. He may be a profound philosopher, and yet be utterly incapable of cultivating his garden, making himself a coat, or performing any manual labour. And, on the other hand, he may be almost as ignorant and more brutalised than the oxen before his plough, and yet his furrows may be straight and deep, and he may be able to turn his hand to almost any useful work upon his master's farm.

It is of very great importance to bear in mind this clear distinction between a man's moral condition and his knowledge of the mechanical arts, because it enables us to understand better the real position of Adam and Eve just banished from Eden.

Contrasted with the savage—

> "A creature squalid, vengeful, and impure,
> Remorseless, and submissive to no law
> But superstitious fear and abject sloth"
> (*Wordsworth's Excursion*, Book iii.)

Adam and Eve were as light is to darkness.

A terrible change had indeed passed over them. In

their hearts guilty fear and shame had taken the place of guileless innocence and a confiding love of their Maker. They had fallen, and were certain, if not in themselves, at least in their descendants, to experience many a deeper and more degrading fall.

In morals more than in the arts of civilisation man falls rapidly and rises slowly; and, as a general rule, when he has reached a certain stage of moral degradation, rarely rises at all without external aid.

Adam and Eve, then, were immeasurably superior to the modern savage as regards their moral condition and religious knowledge.

Children, who have left a home of purity and love and fallen into sinful ways, never, even during a long life of infamy, forget wholly the lessons of their childhood. And so must it have been with our first parents. In all their misery and helplessness they still knew that He Who made them was holy, wise, and merciful, and that, though they had been driven from His presence and condemned to labour, suffering, and death, a Future Deliverer was promised to destroy their enemy and open to them again the way of the tree of life.

And here it is of some importance to consider what the sacred writer means by the cherubim, the flaming sword, and the guarding of the way of the tree of life.

It matters comparatively little whether we are reading an allegory or a literal narrative. In either case the teaching will be the same, and in either case we shall have to inquire what God's object was in guarding the way of the tree of life. Was it to prevent man by terror from re-entering the garden? or was it to preserve the way for his return at some future time; to keep alive the hope of a recovery from his fall, and of an end to his period of banishment?

That this latter was the object has been suggested by

MacWhorter in a little book which deserves to be better known;* and such an interpretation of the passage is suitable to the prediction of future deliverance which immediately followed the fall of man.

And yet, when we read the passage in connection with its context, we can scarcely help inferring that the intention was to keep man out of the garden. He is driven out lest he should eat of the tree, and the way to reach it is guarded.

But surely there was a double object in this. The way of the tree of life was to be blocked, and yet the knowledge of it was to be preserved. And so it was to be guarded by the cherubim until "To him that overcometh it should be given to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7).

But what were these cherubim? and what was this flame of a sword revolving?

It is certain that the sacred writer did not mean angels, and it is not probable that he meant a sword.

Here, as in many other cases, the imaginations of poets and painters have misled us. The figure of a mighty angel with a drawn sword driving before him the guilty pair, or standing at the entrance of the garden brandishing his flashing weapon, may make a fine picture, but it is not the picture drawn by Moses. He does not mention angels at all, but says that God set up cherubim. Angels are frequently mentioned in Holy Scripture, but are always represented as appearing in human form. Indeed, they are often called men. The Jehovah-Angel is no exception. To Joshua He appears as a man with a drawn sword in His hand. It is a comparatively modern misconception to

* "Yahveh Christ; or, The Memorial Name." (Gould & Lincoln, Boston. London, 1857.)

identify cherubim with angels. Cherubim are described as composite symbolical figures, representing apparently the attributes of Deity, and seen in the visions of later prophets as the bearers of the throne of God. But in the Pentateuch they are only mentioned here and as being placed in the tabernacle, overshadowing the mercy-seat with their wings. Between them Jehovah was said to dwell, because it was here in the holy of holies that He revealed His presence by a miraculous light.

And then, what is the flame of a sword turning itself but a common Hebraism for a sword-like flame revolving?

And have we not then, in these composite figures and mysterious fire, whether literally set up as symbols of Jehovah's presence, or forming part of an allegorical picture, the types and models of the cherubim and shechinah of the tabernacle, guarding by their awe-inspiring presence the way into the holiest, from which all but the atoning high priest were to be excluded, until that cry was uttered at which the veil of the temple was rent in twain and the kingdom of heaven was thrown open to all believers.

At any rate it is evident that though man was banished from Eden, a hope of final victory over evil, and so of access to the tree of life, was held out to him from the very beginning.

It is impossible to estimate too highly the moral value of this hope, and the interval which this knowledge places between the most skilful savage and our first parents just banished from Paradise.

But here their superiority to the savage ceases; in all other respects, except perhaps in the climate and natural productions of the country, they were very much more helpless.

The Scriptural starting-point, then, of human civilisation, that is to say, of the progress of man in the arts, sciences,

and material comforts of life, is the lowest which has ever been thought possible by those who have speculated upon the original condition of the human race when man made his first appearance upon the earth.

Interpreters of Scripture have indeed given a very different account of the matter; but we have a right to reject every interpretation which is inconsistent with well-authenticated facts, and which is not expressed or implied in the actual words of the sacred writer.

Adam and Eve may have been instructed, as some suppose, by the Angel of the Lord in some of the simple arts of a rude civilisation, but there is no statement of this kind in Holy Scripture; and when men question the truthfulness of Scripture, it becomes necessary to point out to them what Scripture records. There is no great harm in drawing imaginary pictures of the condition of our first parents; but it is much safer in these days to try to bring before our minds what the Bible really tells us about them.

Now all that we are told is this, that shame suggested to them some kind of clothing; that they first made for themselves girdles of leaves; and that God, before expelling them from Paradise, clothed them in the skins of animals. Or, as rendered in the Jews' family Bible, made "inner garments for the skin, and clothed them." Not one word more is told us of any further instruction in the arts and appliances of life. On the contrary, the stern sentence, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," seems to imply that natural reason and dire necessity were for the future to be man's only teachers of these things.

But however helpless his condition, however hard his lot, he still knew his Maker; he still had some intercourse with Him; the Angel of the Lord from time to time, as in after ages, manifested Himself to him. His religion was as

yet pure and unadulterated by human fancy. It consisted in the knowledge of One Who was good and powerful, and immeasurably superior to himself; from Whom he derived his being, to Whom he owed obedience, and to Whom he might look and pray for guidance and help in all the trials and sorrows of his fallen state.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HUMAN RACE BEFORE THE FLOOD.

WHAT do we know of the human race, its rate of increase or progress in civilisation, before the Flood? Scarcely anything. The Bible tells us very little about it; two short chapters contain all the information it gives us; and there are no other materials of any kind from which anything approaching to a history could be formed.

We don't know what traditions, monuments, or records may have been accessible to Moses, but we certainly have none. Nor does he tell us that any supernatural revelations were given him on the subject.

His truthfulness and inspiration are evidenced by what he omits as well as by what he records. He probably had before him during his Egyptian education a vast number of fables and fanciful speculations of the Egyptian priests. What, we may ask, except the Spirit of God could have enabled him to reject all fables, and to give us a view of man and God, and the relation between them, so far acceptable even to the advanced philosophy and critical judgment of the nineteenth century as to lead some to suspect that the Book of Genesis must have been the production of a later and more advanced age than that of Moses?

We must not forget here the difference we have before pointed out between revelation and inspiration.

Much knowledge, which he could not have acquired in

any other way, was, doubtless, supernaturally communicated to Moses—was, in fact, revealed to him.

Much, also, he obtained by his education in all the learning of the most enlightened people of that age; and then in the use of this knowledge, whether naturally or supernaturally acquired, he was guided by the Spirit of God.

It will help us to form a just conception of these early chapters if we bear in mind how much Moses entirely omits, which we must supply by conjecture, formed as well as we can from our present experience of human affairs.

Now he tells us nothing whatever about the rate of increase or the amount of the population of the antediluvian world. He mentions but few people by name, about five-and-twenty men and three or four women. He says, indeed, of Adam and of all his descendants, that they "begat sons and daughters;" but he does not say how many. And besides this statement of each patriarch that "he begat sons and daughters," he also uses an expression which implies that the rate of increase was very high; he speaks of men "multiplying upon the face of the earth" (Gen. vi. 1).

Here then we must supply the omission as well as we can from our present experience.

The human race, he tells us, starts from a single pair. Yes; but the number of human beings descended from a single pair at the end of fifty or a hundred years must have been very great.

The results of the geometrical ratio of increase are always surprising, and at first, and until we work them out in figures, appear to us quite incredible. "There is no exception," says Darwin, "to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at so high a rate that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair. Even slow-breeding man has doubled in twenty-five

years; and at this rate, in a few thousand years, there would literally not be standing-room for his progeny."

"Linnæus has calculated that if an annual plant produced only two seeds—and there is no plant nearly so unproductive as this—and their seedlings next year produced two, and so on; then in twenty years there would be a million plants. The elephant is the slowest breeder of all known animals, and I have taken some pains to estimate its probable minimum rate of natural increase. It will be safest to assume that it begins breeding when thirty years old, and goes on breeding till ninety years old, bringing forth three pairs of young in this interval; if this be so, at the end of the fifth century there would be alive fifteen million elephants descended from a single pair" (Darwin's "Origin of Species," p. 75).

But Adam and Eve began having children as soon as they were expelled from Paradise; and as we are told that Adam begat sons and daughters, it is reasonable to suppose that they had a much larger family than most married couples in these days. It is scarcely to be imagined that Eve, the mother of all living, had fewer children than many an Englishwoman in the nineteenth century.

Let us suppose her to have given birth to twenty children, ten sons and ten daughters. These would certainly begin having children at fourteen years old, and probably before.

There are many reasons for believing that polygamy did not prevail in the earliest ages. "It was not so from the beginning," says our Lord. And Moses seems to mention the taking of two wives as an innovation introduced by one of the descendants of Cain (Gen. iv. 19).

But without the practice of polygamy, and even without taking into consideration many second marriages or births of twins, the population at the end of the first century must have been considerable. Certainly not less than two thou-

sand; probably very much more. Any one who will take the trouble to make a calculation similar to that which Darwin made about the breeding of elephants will doubtless be greatly astonished at the result.

Here, then, we have an answer to the foolish question of the ignorant objector, "Who was Cain's wife?" And it must be only an ignorant or very inattentive reader who can see any difficulty whatever in Cain's expression, "It shall come to pass that whosoever findeth me shall slay me." Doubtless he had good reason to fear the vengeance of the children or friends of Abel, of whom there must have been a considerable number.

The difficulty also which the English reader may sometimes find in the expression, "The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him," is entirely removed by the more correct rendering of the Revised Version, "The Lord appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him." The sign was not any mark upon Cain's body, but something which gave notice and made public for his protection the Lord's proclamation concerning him, "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold."

It is easy to see why this treatment of Cain should be recorded when so many other things are omitted. It condemns from the first that which is so natural to the corrupt heart of man, which is so subversive of justice and so interminable in its evil results—the gratification of private revenge, that system of blood-feuds so prevalent in the days of Moses, and so carefully provided against by his laws. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blood for blood was to be the principle by which the sentence of the lawful judge was to be given—not the rule of private vengeance, as the Jews misunderstood the precept in our Saviour's time, a mistake which He corrects in the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. v. 38).

And this condemnation of private vengeance is confirmed afterwards in the case of Lamech, the descendant of the murderer Cain. He killed a man in self-defence, and therefore claimed the right of protection from the avenger of blood on stronger grounds than those before laid down in the case of his forefather. His words are thus rendered in the Revised Version: "I have slain a man for wounding me, and a young man for bruising me; if Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold" (Gen. iv. 23).

So far, then, we must supply what Moses omits to tell us about the rapid increase of the human family.

Does he give us any information about man's progress in civilisation, that is to say, in the division of labour, the organisation of society, the building of cities, the discovery of useful arts, and moral and religious institutions?

Here again we may be sure that he had before him in Egypt many strange and mythical traditions of the origin of human society and customs, and of the invention of the mechanical arts. What but the truth-loving Spirit of God could have guided him through this labyrinth of fable? We find none of those myths in his simple and intelligible record of the progress of primeval man. Reading of those men who lived before the Flood, we seem to be walking, as it were, among our own near relations and friends, men of the same form and stature, and of like passions with ourselves. And then just those things are mentioned, and no others, which form the very elements of human society.

Thus we have very early mention of that division of labour which so immensely increases the power of man. "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Gen. iv. 2). People commonly read these words over and over again without stopping to consider what amazing

progress in civilisation they imply. What a leap the narrative has made from the wretchedness and helpless misery of the guilty pair just driven in terror from the home of peace, innocence, and plenty!

We last saw them shivering in conscious nakedness, with scarcely sufficient knowledge to make themselves the rudest clothing or to provide themselves with the means of bare subsistence—in such a helpless state, in fact, that we can scarcely see how they could have survived without some Divine help and guidance. The narrative implies that they received some such help, and that God still had some intercourse with the being whom He had made in His own image.

What a very different state of things is implied by these simple words, "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." Years of sorrow and suffering are wholly passed over. There is not a word of the early and heart-breaking struggles of the guilty pair; no hint of the annual birth and anxious tending of their new-born infants; of the training of their childhood, the growth of their bodies, the development of their characters, their early marriages, their rapid increase. We are not told how stern necessity became the mother of invention, but we pass at a bound to a description of a state of things existing after an interval of perhaps a hundred years.

Then we have flocks and herds, and a good and faithful shepherd watching over them, doubtless with many helpers under him; and we have cornfields, orchards, and vineyards the possessions of Cain.

We shall have to consider by and by the long lives attributed to the patriarchs, which Moses must have recorded, not in words, but by means of letters used as numerals, and which, subsequently written out in words, may have been much exaggerated. But after making

ample allowance for such probable exaggeration, it is quite reasonable to suppose that the average length of human life must have been very great when as yet the constitutions of men were not sapped by disease, or weakened by an artificial mode of living.

Adam is said to have been a hundred and thirty years old when Seth was given to him in room of the murdered Abel. And even if we divide this number by two, we shall be well on in the first century, when Cain and Abel had become, the one a keeper of sheep, and the other a tiller of the ground.

Then we have early mention of another very natural cause of separation among men, resulting in great measure from the important principle of the division of labour, and tending to the better organisation of human society. We read of the dwellers in towns, and the dwellers in the more open country; the settled inhabitants of cities or villages, and the nomadic tribes.

The first builder of a regular town or village is mentioned, and the first nomad. And it is somewhat remarkable, and no slight evidence of the truthfulness of Moses, that the more advanced steps in the march of civilisation are assigned to the descendants of the accursed Cain rather than to those of the more highly-favoured Seth.

Not only does Cain, the tiller of the ground, become the builder of the first town or village, but it is Jabal, one of his descendants, who becomes "the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle;" an expression which does not imply that only his children were nomads, but that he was the first to institute and make a regular custom of that manner of life. So it is Jubal, another of Cain's descendants, who becomes the inventor of music and musical instruments—implying not only great material progress, but also a considerable advance in the pleasures and

refinements of human life. A still greater advance in mechanical skill is attributed to another of his children, who discovers the use of the metals, and teaches men to make tools and weapons far better than those of stone or wood. "Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron" (Gen. iv. 17–23).

These scanty notices tell us all we can know for certain about the condition and progress of man before the Flood. But the description afterwards given of the building of the Ark proves that his knowledge of the mechanical arts must have been very great, for many and skilful hands must have been employed by Noah in the construction of that huge vessel, alike in its proportions and equal in size to many of our modern ships.

The fourth chapter closes with an account of the birth of Seth in place of the murdered Abel, who seems specially mentioned as one of the ancestors of Noah and Abraham.

Judging from the very brief notices given in these chapters of the primeval religion of mankind, we may infer that it consisted of two parts—the offering of first-fruits and sacrifices, and some forms of prayer and public worship.

We are not told whether this religion was the natural product of men's own minds or divinely commanded, but the latter seems most probable.

The offering of first-fruits may seem natural enough, but when we consider the extraordinary character of sacrifice, the killing of an animal upon the altar of God, we can scarcely help believing that men must have been commanded to do this as a type from the very first of the death of Him Who was to come, "The Lamb of God, which taketh way the sin of the world."

It does not, however, follow from this that Cain's offering was rejected because it was not an animal. This may

have been the case, but there is not a word in the narrative to lead us to think so. It is far more probable that Cain was rejected because he came with an offering to One Who reads the heart, and Who afterwards said to Israel by the prophet, "I will not reprove thee because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt-offerings, because they were not always before Me. . . . Thinkest thou that I will eat bull's flesh or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most Highest. And call upon Me in the time of trouble: so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me" (Ps. l. 7–16).

His evil life rather than the nature of his offering seems indeed to be the reason given for Cain's rejection. "The Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Gen. iv. 6, 7).

Such, then, is the extent of our knowledge of the human race before the Flood. We are told everything which we need to know, and nothing or next to nothing to satisfy mere natural curiosity.

There may be no great harm in the speculations of some theologians. Adam may have been created an Aristotle or a Newton. This may have been so; but Moses is not responsible for any such theory. And when his truthfulness is called in question, it is only fair to confine ourselves strictly to what he says.

Although he emphasises man's creation and that of woman, his companion; attributes to him the god-like qualities of intellect and a moral nature, and assigns to him the work of replenishing the earth and subduing it, of filling the world with his descendants, ruling over the brute creation, and making them and the forces of Nature his servants; he nevertheless says plainly that his origin was exactly the same as that of all other creatures. "The Lord God

formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). And this expression, "a living soul," signifies in the Hebrew, as it has been explained above, nothing more than that man became an animal, a living creature, the very same expression being used of all the other animals.

Such was man, and such the condition and progress of the human race as described by Moses. What light does the narrative throw upon the present condition of his descendants?

We have existing in the world, as a stubborn fact, moral evil, an inability in every man born into the world to keep his lower nature in perfect subjection to his higher will, that which the Bible calls sin. We observe that this moral weakness is handed down from father to son, and has been so from generation to generation, so that history records only one Human Being Who was absolutely free from sin. Modern research has also thoroughly established the fact that not only physical diseases, but also evil moral tendencies are inherited. What follows from this? Clearly that the first man endowed with intellect and moral freedom (whether he was the final result of an evolutionary process, or was produced by a kind of incarnation of intellect, or brought into existence, as seems most probable, by an immediate act of creative energy *) was either a sinner and the father of sinners, or one who, being made perfect, failed in the trial which every free moral agent must of necessity go through.

To this most important question Moses gives us no doubtful answer. Whatever view we may take of the story of Eden, its teaching cannot be mistaken. It points out

* See chap. xix.

in the clearest manner the nature of our moral trial, the elements and origin of temptation, and the consequences of sin to the sinner and his children. Moses does not tell us what would have happened if Adam had not sinned. Nor does the Bible tell us or lead us to suppose that if Adam had stood firm all his children would have done so. Perhaps some would and some would not.

What Moses teaches is just that which we most require to know, that, whatever might have happened if Adam had not sinned, as a fact he did sin, and that all his children, as a natural consequence of his fall, inherit, not indeed his guilt, but moral weakness and inability perfectly to control their lower nature.

This story of Eden, like the rest of the Bible, teaches us to distinguish clearly between temptation and sin, and shows in the plainest manner that guilt is incurred only when the will consents to evil.

Thus original or birth sin is defined in our Ninth Article to consist in "the fault and corruption of the nature of every one naturally descended from Adam" ("vitium," which means a defect, "et depravatio naturæ"), and not, as in the case of Adam, in the fall of one perfectly capable of standing.

Adam fell when he had power to stand. Guilt and actual sin commence in his children as soon as their will is sufficiently developed to be capable of choice; and, as inheritors of a damaged moral nature, they cannot by their own strength always refuse evil and choose good.

St. Paul, therefore, thus utters the despairing cry of the natural man, similar to the Roman poet's description of the struggle between a sense of duty and passion, "video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor"—"I see and approve the better things; I follow after those which are worse." "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I

would not, that I do. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this dead body? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 19, 24). He, the Seed of the woman, but not "naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam," crushes with wounded heel the serpent's head. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2).

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENEALOGIES OF NOAH AND ABRAHAM.

We must now examine the third section of these eleven introductory chapters of Genesis, which is called "The book of the generations of Adam;" and it will be convenient to consider at the same time the sixth section, called "The generations of Shem." They both contain a list of names and scarcely anything else.

In "The book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. v.), the first thing which strikes us in reading it is this: that if it stood alone, we should certainly infer from verses 3 and 4 that Seth was Adam's first-born son; that he was begotten when Adam was 130 years old, after which time Adam had other sons and daughters born to him.

From this we may see how very careful we should be in reading the Bible to remember the extreme brevity of the narrative, and that Moses rarely mentions anything more than that which is necessary for the object immediately before him.

He had no occasion here to mention any name except that of Seth, and therefore does not mention any. He knew that this section did not stand alone, and therefore that his readers could not possibly make the mistake of thinking that Seth was Adam's first-born, or that he had not had very many sons and daughters before him.

Then in the next place we naturally ask ourselves, is

it credible that these men lived nearly a thousand years? Which is the more probable, that men should have lived nine hundred years, or that copyists should have unintentionally exaggerated the number originally written by Moses or handed down to him from his forefathers? The latter seems the more probable.

There are no figures in Hebrew, and although numbers are given in words in all existing MSS. of the Bible, there are many reasons for believing that they were originally expressed by letters of the alphabet.

How easily, therefore, unintentional mistakes and exaggerations may have arisen.

And there are many passages of Scripture which prove that letters must have been formerly used for numbers. Thus we have in the Hebrew text of Gen. ii. 2, "And on the *seventh* day God ended His work which He had made: and He rested on the *seventh* day." Whereas the Septuagint has it thus: "And God ended on the *sixth* day His works which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day."

Of course the translator may have made this alteration on purpose to make better sense, but it seems much more probable that some confusion must have arisen between the letters standing for *six* and *seven*, either then or at some previous time.

In 2 Kings xxiv. 8 Jehoiachin is said to have been eighteen years old, but in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9 the number given is eight. Again, in 1 Kings iv. 26 we read that Solomon had 40,000 stalls for horses, whereas in 2 Chron. ix. 25 he is said to have had only 4000.

There are many other instances of this difference of numbers in parallel passages, so that wherever an incredible or improbable number is mentioned in the Old Testament, we may, without questioning the authenticity of the general

narrative, safely conclude that there has been some unintentional exaggeration by copyists.

At any rate, it is quite impossible to feel certain that we have the numbers which Moses wrote; although we may observe that in every instance except that of Noah, which is given in a round number, the patriarch is said to have lived this incredible number of years after the birth of the chosen son.

Thus Adam, having had many children born to him before, begets Seth in the place of Abel when he is 130 years old; a great age indeed, but not incredible. Then after the birth of Seth he is said to have lived 800 years. Now it so happens that the Hebrew letter which stands for 80 in its usual form, as used in the middle of a word or sentence, was in later times written differently when occurring at the end of a sentence. In its natural form standing for 80, when final it stands for 800.

This is not mentioned as the real cause of the error, if it be an error, in this instance, but only to illustrate how easily the record of such amazing numbers in this and other parts of the Bible may have originated. We don't know what may have been the form of the ancient letters, but it is probable they may have been quite as likely to have been mistaken one for another as more modern ones.

What have we then in the fifth chapter? Only a list of names. The name of only one out of the many sons of each of Noah's ancestors is mentioned, and, except in the case of Enoch and Noah, nothing whatever is said of them except that they lived a certain number of years and begat sons and daughters.

And yet it is upon this list of names and doubtful numbers, and that of Section vi. contained in chapter xi. 10–26, and called "The generations of Shem," an even more meagre list of names connected with equally doubtful

numbers, that the whole question of the antiquity of the human race rests.

It is literally from these two lists of names and from nothing else recorded by Moses that we can form even the vaguest conjecture as to the interval of time which separates the birth of Abraham from the creation of Adam.

Of course, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, it is natural to conclude that Abraham was separated from Adam by a period of something over 2000 years.

But it is clear from the remains discovered even of the works of civilised man, that these lists of names cannot be perfect, and that we cannot depend upon the dates which they suggest. And we have no reason to think that the Bible was intended to teach us chronology any more than natural science.

Nor need we suppose that these genealogies were given to Moses by any supernatural revelation. He does not claim any such guidance, nor can we see any reason why he should have received it.

It is enough that he avoids all mythological fables of heroes and demigods, and gives us the names which had come down to him by tradition of men like ourselves, who really lived upon the earth and were too conspicuous to be forgotten by their direct descendants. The practice, too, of compressing genealogies to assist the memory by the omission of a great many names is not unknown, and we have an example of this even in the genealogy of our Lord, given us by St. Matthew.

It is certain, at any rate, that we must put back the Flood to a very much earlier date than that hitherto derived from this list of names to give time for the rise and fall of civilisations which have left in the sands of Egypt and Asia imperishable evidences of their existence.

Man, sufficiently advanced in civilisation to leave these

monuments behind him, must have existed many ages, we know not yet how many, before the time of Abraham; and there is not a word in the Bible, except the genealogy of Shem, to lead us to think that he did not. Whereas, on the contrary, there are many circumstances mentioned which render probable a very long interval of time between Abraham and the Flood.

And it is here, rather than before the Flood, that a longer interval is needed to allow time for the rise and fall of empires, whose temples and palaces are frequently being discovered.

The Flood, which, though not universal, probably destroyed the whole human race, may well have occurred within a few generations from Adam; but the growth of the vast civilisations alluded to in the days of Abraham could not have taken place in the short period of 200 or 300 years.

Let us next examine, therefore, the fourth section of the introductory chapters of Genesis, which contains the account of the Flood, and is called "The generations of Noah." It is prepared for by the first eight verses of the sixth chapter.

In these a strange misconception has arisen from the very simple words of the sacred writer, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose" (Gen. vi. 2).

Some have supposed that the sons of God here mentioned were the angels or some superhuman beings, as though Moses were imitating or originating one of the many mythological fables of Paganism. And this interpretation, which contradicts many other passages of Scripture, is still given even by some who do not seem anxious to undermine the authority of Moses by attributing to him such an absurd and improbable statement.

It is quite true that in one or two highly figurative and poetical passages the angels are called the sons of God, and of course they may very properly be so called, as in Job i. 6, ii. 1, and xxxviii. 7, the context in these passages showing clearly that the angels are intended.

In every other instance the sons of God, or the children of God, mean the true worshippers of God, or those who, from having been received into covenant with Him, ought to be His true worshippers. Thus in Exodus iv. 23 we read, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, My first-born, . . . Let My son go, that he may serve Me." In Hosea i. 10, "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." In St. John i. 12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." In 1 John iii. 10 we have this distinction drawn between the true and false children: "In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." And in chapter iii. 2 he writes, "Now are we the sons of God," &c. And in all these passages the Greek is rendered in Baxter's Hebrew New Testament by the very same Hebrew words which occur in the passage we are considering, "the sons of Elohim."

It seems strange that any should fail to see the meaning of this passage who are taught from their earliest childhood to say that they were made the children of God in their Baptism. Yet so it is, and we have here only another instance of the marvellous tenacity with which we cling to the teachings of the nursery, however great may be the absurdities they involve.

But this is not the only passage which implies the selection of a chosen people before the Flood, who might fitly

be called, as afterwards, the children of God as distinguished from those who had fallen away from Him.

There are intimations of the existence of a system of Divine worship, and a distinction between the true and the false worshippers, even in these very brief and sketchy notices of the early condition and progress of mankind.

To say nothing of the difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel, it is hard to imagine what can be the meaning of the words, "Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah" (Gen. iv. 16, 26), if they do not imply some sort of separation beginning between the true worshippers, the ancestors of the righteous Noah, and the rest of mankind.

And then the mention of these intermarriages seems to give some clue to the otherwise very strange and unaccountable circumstance that Noah alone and his family remained faithful, and so "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." It brings out strongly the utterly hopeless state of incorrigible wickedness prevailing in the world when the sacred writer tells us that even the children of God were falling away, and, by marriages contracted from mere worldly or carnal motives, were making common cause with unbelievers and casting in their lot with them.

And it is to be observed that the expression "children of men" is sometimes used in Scripture of the unfaithful, worldly, or profane. Thus the Psalmist exclaims, "The children of men are but vanity: the children of men are deceitful upon the weights; they are altogether lighter than vanity itself" (Ps. lxii. 9).

Having, then, so many examples in the rest of Scripture of the use of the expression "sons of God" for the more faithful or chosen people, we may feel perfectly certain that Moses is not responsible for any of the gross absurdities which some interpreters of Scripture have attributed to him. He merely gives us here one of the principal causes

of the rapid corruption of mankind, the falling away of those who ought to have been the salt of the earth and the light of the world; the contempt of their privileges, even by those who called themselves, in distinction from the rest of mankind, the children of God.

It is not easy to determine the exact meaning of the third verse, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be an hundred and twenty years." Some render it, "My spirit shall not be made low in man for ever," *i.e.*, the higher and Divine nature in man shall not for ever be humiliated in the lower. Others translate it, "My spirit shall not rule in man for ever," or "shall not dwell in man for ever." And Kalisch seems to prefer the following explanation of the passage: "My spirit shall not for so long a period preside in the fleshly frame of man; his life shall be shorter; he shall live only one hundred and twenty years."

It matters little for the general bearing of the passage which of these translations we adopt, or whether the hundred and twenty years refer to the period of man's natural life, or, as many think, to the time to be allowed to give the wicked the opportunity of repentance before the Flood should destroy them. The words, in any case, imply that God's patience was nearly exhausted, and that the time of judgment was at hand.

In reading the verses which follow next, we must be careful to remember how much the language of Scripture is accommodated to the ignorance of man.

It is strange that any except the enemies of the Bible should find a difficulty in the expression, "It repented the Lord that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. vi. 6).

The same kind of language is used when God says to Samuel, "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be

king; for he is turned back from following Me." In neither case is it meant that God, like a man, can be as it were, taken by surprise, as though He had made a mistake for lack of knowledge or foresight.

He who sees the end from the beginning cannot be taken by surprise or make mistakes; and therefore, in the very same chapter, Samuel declares that there can be nothing like man's repentance or weakness of purpose in God. "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He is not a man, that He should repent" (1 Sam. xv. 11, 29).

Wherever, therefore, human passions or feelings are attributed to God, we must remember that the sacred writer is accommodating his language to human ideas and man's ignorance.

In what other language could he have made himself intelligible to the majority of mankind? Genesis was not written in the first instance for the philosophers and scientific thinkers of the nineteenth century, but for a people just delivered from slavery in Egypt, and for those blessed ones in every age, who, being humble in spirit, are morally fitted to understand the judgments and the mercies of God.

To misunderstand this language is quite as absurd as to give a literal meaning to such expressions as, "This is the finger of God;" "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers;" "The hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save;" and countless other modes of speech of the same kind. If these words do not imply that the sacred writer thought that the invisible God has eyes and ears and hands and fingers like a man, why should we take his expressions literally when he tells us "that God repented, and was grieved at His heart"?

Bearing this in mind, let us use a little common sense in studying the narrative of the Flood.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NARRATIVE OF THE FLOOD.

We need not believe that the Flood of Noah covered the whole globe; and yet, without in the slightest degree questioning the authenticity of the narrative or the inspiration of the writer, we may candidly admit that he meant to describe a catastrophe which affected the whole world, and that there is perhaps scarcely one reader in a thousand who would understand the narrative in any other sense.

It is true indeed that "the earth" often means, as here, the people upon it. "The earth was corrupt, and God saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt." Neither does the earth necessarily mean what we understand by the globe. It is frequently used in a much more limited sense; but it means the whole world in Gen. i. 1. "God created the heaven and the earth;" and the describer of the Flood, we may be sure, whether it was Noah or Moses, intended his readers to understand, what he thought himself, that the whole world, so far as he knew anything about it, was covered with water.

Such must have been the impression produced upon Noah's mind from the words which God spoke to him, and from his own experience.

His knowledge of geography and natural history could not have been very extensive, and it is very improbable

that he had any just conception of the shape or size of the world, or of the multitudes of living things existing upon it.

But he did know something about the limited area at that time occupied by the human race, and was acquainted with a certain number of domestic and other animals. He did know also that the waters covered the whole of that area, and destroyed every man and beast existing upon it.

What could he infer from this but that the Flood was universal? And in what other language, more limited, could God have predicted this deluge, without first giving Noah lessons in geography and natural history, and making him acquainted with vast continents, to be in after times peopled by some of his descendants, and then to be lost sight of by his part of the earth, some of them even till the days of Columbus?

There is every reason for thinking that the Flood happened very soon after the creation of man, and certainly not later than the ninth or tenth generation; and so at a time when men had not yet gone far from their original home; and then that an interval much longer than we should infer from the compressed genealogy of Shem occurred between the death of Noah and the birth of Abraham.

It is possible that future discoveries may enable us to conjecture the extent of this interval, but at present we can only say that it must have been very great.

All, then, that this narrative requires us to believe is, that the waters destroyed the whole human race, and all living creatures which existed in that part of the world occupied by man or known to him.

Why should we understand the language of Genesis more literally than that of St. Luke, whose inspiration and truthfulness we do not question when he writes, "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should

be taxed." He means, of course, all the Roman world, although the word he uses means all the inhabited world.

These wide and general expressions must always be understood, not with scientific accuracy, but with such limitations as the context and the purpose of the writer may naturally suggest. And so here, as it has already been observed, the word "earth" evidently means, like the expression of St. Luke, the inhabited earth. "The earth was corrupt before God." Of what else had either Noah or Moses any knowledge whatever? And why should we expect God to have told them that the globe was much larger than they supposed?

The words of God to Noah were, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground, both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air," which must, of course, mean all those living with man. And again, "The end of all flesh is come before Me." "I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh; . . . everything that is in the earth shall die."

Noah, must, of course, have understood these words as referring to the whole world; and, like St. Luke's words, they did refer to the whole world, with equal truthfulness and similar limitations. The words were spoken in accommodation to the ignorance of those who heard them, and were also exactly true in the sense in which Noah understood them: they referred to the whole world occupied by man, and to every living thing under heaven whose existence was known to him.

That the Flood was universal, so far as the whole human race is concerned, seems almost certain from the traditions which exist in every part of the world. The following are the words of Kalisch:—

"It is unnecessary to observe that there is scarcely a single feature in the Biblical account which is not dis-

covered in one or several of the heathen traditions. And the coincidences are not limited to desultory details; they extend to the whole outlines, and the very tenor and spirit of the narrative: it is almost everywhere the sin of man which renders the determination of the All-just Judge irrevocable; one pious man is saved, with his family, to form the nucleus of a new population; an ark is introduced, and pairs of the whole animal creation are collected; birds are sent out to ascertain the condition of the earth, an altar is built and sacrifices are offered. And yet it is certain that none of these accounts are derived from the pages of the Bible; they are independent of each other; their differences are as striking and characteristic as their analogies; they are echoes of a sound which had long vanished away. It would be miraculous to suppose that such a remarkable concurrence is accidental; the legends of the Chaldeans and the Mosaic narrative bear not only a family likeness, but they have the very appearance of twins. There must indisputably have been a common basis, a universal source. And this source is the general tradition of primitive generations. The harmony between all these accounts is an undeniable guarantee that the tradition is no idle invention; a fiction is individual, not universal; that tradition has, therefore, a historical foundation; it is the result of an event which really happened in the ages of the childhood of mankind; it was altered, adorned, and it may be magnified, by the dissemination; it was tinctured with a specifically national colouring by the different nations; it borrowed some characteristic traits from every country in which it was diffused; it assumed the reflex of the various religious systems; but though the features were modified, the general character was indestructible, and remains strikingly visible" (Kalisch's "Commentary on Genesis," p. 205).

This miraculous judgment, therefore, which was meant

to teach men that God is in earnest when He threatens to punish, as well as when He promises to reward, produced an impression which neither centuries nor millenniums have been able to efface.

But when we read the account of it in the simple language of Scripture, we find none of the monstrous absurdities which deform all the heathen traditions of the event, but we seem to have before us the narrative of an eye-witness.

Did Noah himself, we are almost inclined to ask, write this story, or verbally commit the details of it to memory, and cause his children to learn them, and to hand them down from generation to generation through the ancestors of the chosen people.

Is the section with the heading, "These are the generations of Noah," a monograph which had come to Abraham and so to Moses? or were the incidents of the deluge revealed to him in some miraculous manner? or had he before him, as some suppose, the Chaldæan and other traditions, and then, guided by the Spirit of God, did he exclude from them that which was evidently fabulous, and retain only the residuum of truth?

It is unnecessary to attempt to answer any such questions, since it is quite impossible to find out how Moses acquired his information. We have nothing to guide us except the narrative itself, which we cannot read without feeling persuaded that the writer had a sufficient knowledge of the events which he describes; so much so, that it reads almost, as already observed, like a narrative of an eye-witness.

There is nothing strange or fable-like about the description of the Ark. Its size was very great, but not at all too great for the purpose for which it was made; and the construction of such a vessel, as already remarked, implies a consider-

able knowledge of the mechanical arts in the antediluvian world.

Men could not have existed long on the earth without having invented and used some kind of vessels for navigating the rivers and the sea. The Ark differed from these only in its enormous size and vast capacity, for its proportions are much the same as those of some of our largest modern ships. It had three decks, was divided into cells, and was well lighted from above.

Only critics determined to find difficulties can misunderstand the expression, "A window shalt thou make to the Ark." It is simply ridiculous to understand this as meaning one little window. It is rendered in the Revised Version, "A light shalt thou make to the Ark," and by Gesenius, "Light shalt thou make for the Ark, *i.e.*, windows."

It is idle to speculate upon the shape of the Ark, whether it was built at all like a modern ship, or whether, as seems more probable, it was like a huge flat-bottomed barge. Neither can we even conjecture whether it was built on dry land, or in some great river where other vessels were usually made.

In any case, we may be sure its great size and apparent uselessness must have exposed its builder to a good deal of ridicule.

The principal thing which the writer wishes us to understand is this, that the Flood was a miraculous flood, and that Noah was forewarned that it was coming, was told why it was coming, and plainly directed how to escape destruction from it.

All speculations, too, about the number of animals rescued, as well as the secondary causes by which the deluge was brought about, are useless, as likely to lead to no satisfactory result. We are told just that which we require to know in order to understand the purpose and result of the judgment, and nothing whatever to satisfy curiosity.

The Flood was evidently very sudden, and was not caused by rain only. Just seven days before it occurred, Noah and his family, and those living creatures which were to be preserved, entered into the Ark, and then the Flood came with a suddenness which overwhelmed all the rest.

Its suddenness is implied in the words, "It came to pass after the seven days that the waters of the Flood were upon the earth" (vii. 10), and still further in the expression, "On the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (vii. 11).

The waters evidently came partly from the sea and partly from the rain. There must have occurred on a large scale one of those wave-like tremors of the crust of the earth, such as are frequently experienced when there is an earthquake, and which often cause the sea to overflow the land, and then go back again into its bed.

Many thousands have often been destroyed in a few hours by such an influx of the sea; and in what more simple language could an eye-witness describe such a catastrophe happening on a large scale than that in the passage we are considering: "The fountains of the great deep were broken up." The springs of the great ocean burst forth.

To expect Moses or the narrator of the Flood, whoever he may have been, to give us an exact and scientific account of the secondary causes by which God brought it about is absurd in the extreme; especially when we reflect that there is not a man living in this nineteenth century who can do more than guess at the real causes of the volcanic eruptions and earthquakes which suddenly and frequently occur in these days, often when least expected.

If it is true that the waters were more than twenty feet higher than the tops of the hills, and yet that they did not envelop the whole globe, there must have been some temporary and gradual depression of the land and upheaval of

the bed of the neighbouring oceans, on a larger scale, and yet perhaps similar in kind to that which commonly occurs whenever an earthquake takes place.

Such phenomena frequently precede or accompany earthquakes.

During the eruption of Krakatoa in the Strait of Sunda, a mighty wave swept away at least 50,000 people, and carried a large steamer nearly three miles inland.

Such a catastrophe may give us some idea of the vast resources at the command of Him Who made and rules "the heaven and the earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters" (Rev. xiv. 7); and none can feel any difficulty about the secondary causes or extent of the Flood of Noah who believe in Him Who "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still . . . and the wind and the sea obeyed Him" (St. Mark iv. 39–41).

The gathering together and implied docility of the animals can present no difficulty to those who believe in miracles at all, especially to those who believe that the miraculous draught of fishes and the finding of the tribute-money in the fish's mouth were real events.

We cannot, of course, expect to persuade those, who have given up all faith in the supernatural, to believe that this narrative or anything else recorded in the Bible is true. Neither is this book written for such persons, but for those only, who, believing in the great Creator and Governor of the world, are yet perplexed by the many traditional interpretations of His Word, which modern knowledge has shown to be improbable.

Nothing can be more simple or truth-like than the description of the gradual drying up of the waters, and the coming forth of Noah and his family from their long imprisonment in the Ark. And then follows the promise that no such universal flood shall ever occur again, but

that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22).

The rainbow was selected as the token of this covenant; but it is a misconception to imagine that this beautiful phenomenon then appeared for the first time. As well might we suppose that water or bread and wine did not exist until they had been made the symbols of the Spirit of God and the Body and Blood of Christ.

No one who does not wish to find or make difficulties in the Bible can fail to see the meaning of the simple words, "I do set My bow in the cloud," or, as it is rendered in the margin of the Revised Version, "I have set My bow in the cloud."

Of course, any one ignorant of the causes of the refraction of light might fancy that the rainbow was then seen for the first time. It is even conceivable, though not probable, that Moses himself thought so, as many have who have since read his words.

But to tie the words to this meaning is to violate the principle already laid down for the interpretation of the popular language of Scripture. They mean, no doubt, something like this, "There is My bow in the cloud; henceforth it shall be the token of the covenant I now make with you. When I look upon it, and when you look upon it, it shall remind us of the promise that all mankind shall never again be destroyed by a flood."

The account of the deluge closes with the story of the disrespectful conduct of Ham, and the utterance by Noah in consequence of it of one of the most remarkable prophecies of the Bible, and one which has been conspicuously fulfilled, and is still in course of fulfilment, in our own times.

But here, at the risk of being thought singular, the writer of these pages cannot help expressing a hope that the char-

acter of righteous Noah has been unnecessarily maligned by almost all commentators.

The language of the original does not compel us to believe that Noah was drunk, in the worst sense in which we use that term. "He drank of the wine and was drunken." But the word "was drunken" has not always this meaning, but may signify drank largely and was satisfied with wine.

After working all through the heat of the day in his vineyard, the old man comes home and drinks freely and to his satisfaction of his wine, and then lies down to rest in his tent, and in his sleep throws off his clothing.

Ham sees, and, as the simple narrative seems to imply, derisively calls his son Canaan and his brethren to look. But Shem and Japheth, with respectful delicacy, cover their father again without looking upon him or waking him.

In Haggai i. 6 this same Hebrew verb is used, and the context proves that it means only to have enough, to be satisfied. "Ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm." In Cant. v. 1 it is translated, "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." This scarcely meant literally "make thyself drunk." Again, in this very book we read that Joseph and his brethren "drank and were merry with him" (Gen. xliii. 34), where in the margin of the Revised Version this word "were merry"—the same word as that used of Noah—is translated "drank largely."

Unless we are prepared, therefore, to take away not only the character of Noah, but also that of Joseph and his brethren, it seems hard not to give the righteous patriarch the benefit of the doubt.

Some, also, may think the story of Ham and his brothers too insignificant to be recorded in the Bible. But a very little consideration will make us think otherwise.

What better foundations for the character shall we find than respect for an aged parent, and pure and delicate modesty? And it is to the absence of these principles in his descendants that we must attribute the degradation and loathsome immorality, which, in the strong and indignant language of Scripture, caused the land of Canaan to "vomit out its inhabitants."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROPHECY OF NOAH AND THE TOWER OF BABEL.

THE prophecy of Noah is very remarkable, and is rarely sufficiently considered.

The event which led to it must have occurred, and the prophetic words must have been spoken, some considerable time after the Flood; for Canaan, who was not the eldest son of Ham, must have grown up sufficiently to give some indications of his future character; and the words seem to imply that he must have been present with his father at the time, and been a partaker in his sin. Why otherwise does Noah curse Canaan instead of Ham?

This can only be because he is uttering a prophecy, and because the prescient Spirit of God, which guided his words, foresaw the loathsome wickedness of the future Canaanites, and the degradation to which it would lead.

But this mention of Canaan instead of Ham is only one of the very remarkable features of this prophecy which bear witness to its truth.

We must remember that these words of Noah are recorded by Moses and occur in the Bible of the Hebrews. It is conceivable that Moses might particularise Canaan to encourage the Israelites to attack his descendants boldly, with the feeling that the curse of God rested on them. But of those who question the genuineness of this prophecy we have a right to ask how Moses or any Israelite came to

give Japheth, in his descendants, the final superiority over his brethren?

Religious privilege is assigned to Shem: "Blessed be (or blessed is) the Lord God of Shem;" and superiority over Canaan: "Canaan shall be his servant." But larger empire and the final acquisition of the privileges, if not of the possessions, of Shem seem to be given to the Northern and European descendants of Japheth, with whom Israel, at the time of the Exodus and for many subsequent generations, could have been very little acquainted.

The words, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant," are not what we should expect from a descendant of Shem.

Names in Scripture are often suggested by the Spirit or by the providence of God are given to men, as modes of revealing the future; and this seems to have happened in the case of Japheth.

The word means "widely spreading," and the verb from which the name is formed begins the prophetic sentence: "God shall make large room for Japheth, and he shall lie down in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."

The more we study this prophecy in connection with the account of the geographical distribution of nations given in the tenth chapter which immediately follows, the more remarkable it will appear.

A few only of the sons of Japheth are mentioned, and then they are briefly disposed of by the words, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands."

In the time of Moses, the Canaanites, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians, were the rulers of the known world, the mighty builders of those towers, pyramids, and temples, which excite the wonder of the archæologist, as well as of

the great cities Babylon and Nineveh, which have recently been exhumed.

And yet it is of the forefather of one of the most powerful of these races that the Prophet says, "Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren."

The descendants of Canaan are mentioned because it was on them, for their atrocious wickedness, that the curse was first to take effect.

But what, we may ask, is the present condition of the rulers of the world in the days of Moses, the Cushites or Ethiopians of Arabia and Africa, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and the Hittites?

And may we not say of that which is called in Scripture the Land of Ham, that, in accordance with other later prophecies, it has long been the basest of nations, and its original inhabitants the servants of servants to the superior races which have succeeded them?

The Shemitic races had their turn of empire in the days of the later Assyrians, and even of the Hebrews in the time of Solomon.

But from the age of Marathon, those who were so long lost sight of, those by whom the isles of the Gentiles were divided, came to the front and began the history of the European world, fulfilling the words of the ancient prophet, "God shall make large room for Japheth, and he shall occupy the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."

In the days of Mahomet the falsification of this prophecy seemed possible, and even probable, and the Shemitic children of Ishmael appeared not unlikely to gain the empire of the world.

But what are they now? and who have inherited the religious privileges of Shem, if not nearly all the possessions which once were his?

Europe, we must remember, and Russia, and Northern

and perhaps Eastern Asia, were peopled by the descendants of Japheth; and they have spread widely indeed, and are still spreading over the vast continents of America, over India, and over the colonies of the British Empire, on which the sun never sets.

Rightly was our great forefather called Japheth, the widely-spreading one; and it seems impossible not to recognise some dim traces of the remembrance of him in the mythology of the Greeks, who looked back to one called Iapetos as the founder of the human race.

The Septuagint has Iapheth, and *ph* and *th* being the same in Hebrew as *p* and *t*, the name Iapetos is simply the Hebrew name with a Greek termination; much closer, in fact, than the Greek Iesus is to its Hebrew form Joshua.

The Greeks, who took greater liberties than almost any nation in the translation of foreign names into their own language, have in this instance merely added a Greek termination.

And here we have a right to ask the unbeliever to explain how it came to pass that a writer, sprung from a race enslaved in Egypt for four hundred years, and educated in an idolatrous court, composed or compiled a narrative of the origin of the human race free from the impossible nonsense of the Greek and other mythological systems?

It is intelligible if we believe him to have been guided by the Spirit of God, but on no other supposition.

We get into such a habit of expecting the writers of the Bible to abstain from mythological fictions, that we forget what a proof this is of their inspiration.

The Greeks, we must remember, were among the most gifted races of mankind. They advanced both the body and the mind of man to the highest degree of perfection. They produced the greatest poets, historians, philosophers, statesmen, generals, architects, sculptors, and painters which

the world has ever seen. Even the men of the nineteenth century regard their productions as inimitable models for themselves.

Why then, we may ask, do they, and all other nations upon the face of the earth, go so far astray in their conceptions of God, and in their attempts to describe the origin of the world or of the human race?

Why is there Iapetus, a mere mythical being, the father of Prometheus, who makes a man and woman of clay or of particles taken from other animals, and gives them life with fire which he had stolen from heaven; while the Japheth of Genesis is a man like one of us, conspicuous for his modesty and filial affection, and one to whom God promises extensive empire and superiority for his descendants over those of all his brethren?

And again we may ask, is it likely that any Israelite, between the ages of Moses and Ezra, proud of his descent from Shem, and expecting the sovereignty of the world in the days of the Messiah, would have given in his forged Genesis universal dominion to Japheth, the forefather of the inhabitants of the isles of the Gentiles? Even one of those subsequent editors of Genesis, of whom our modern critics speak, would scarcely have left this prophecy as it stands in the Hebrew text if he had not felt persuaded that Moses had stamped it as authentic.

It is not only the singularly pure monotheism of these chapters, but also the fulfilment of the prophecies they contain, and the absence of all impossible nonsense in the description they give of the origin of things, which prove that the composer or compiler of them was enlightened and guided by the Spirit of God.

The mania for tracing every conceivable thing to an evolutionary process has caused some to question the antiquity of the Pentateuch, merely because it teaches pure monotheism.

Having determined *a priori*, and without even a particle of evidence, that the belief in One Living God has been reached by man himself, and gradually evolved by his own unaided thought and experience, such persons pronounce as comparatively modern any book which teaches it.

But what right have they to do so? The hypothesis is not supported by a single fact, but is contradicted by many.

The principal one is this, that for at least 2000 years before the Christian era, or, for the sake of argument, say for 1000 years, out of all the literature of the world the Hebrew Bible alone taught the purest monotheism from end to end.

This unique characteristic of the literature of a despised people, which, in accordance with an early prophecy, "dwelt alone and was scarcely reckoned among the nations," is sufficient to mark it as Divinely inspired; even if its prophecies had not been so conspicuously fulfilled, and its moral tone so pure and exalted, and if it had not borne witness to Him Who came to fulfil its very earliest prophecy, The Seed of a woman, but without human father, Who suffered the wounding of the heel while He crushed the serpent's head.

Very shortly after the Flood we read of the founding of Babylon, and the dispersion of the three families of Noah over the world.

Of all the popular misconceptions which have arisen from inattention to the actual words of these early chapters of Genesis, the most absurd and the most groundless is that which regards the builders of the Tower of Babel as guilty of the extreme folly of attempting to build a tower up to heaven.

Nothing was farther from the mind of the writer of this simple narrative than any such idea; and his account of the building of Babylon and the dispersion of the nations

is another instance of the way in which the guidance of the Spirit of God enabled him to keep clear of all mythological and impossible nonsense.

We have here, too, another instance of the manufacture of Bible difficulties, which disappear directly the attention is directed to the actual words of Scripture.

The words are, "Let us build for ourselves a city and a tower and its head *in* heaven;" as we should say, "with its head in heaven," *i.e.*, very lofty.

We have the very same expression in Deut. i. 28, "The cities are great and walled up to heaven."

It seems strange that any should misunderstand such an expression who read in Virgil how Calchas advised the Greeks to make a wooden horse, "Cœloque educere jussit," —"and ordered them to build it up to heaven" (Æn. ii. 186). Yet so it is, and when this misconception has been removed, many fall back upon the equally absurd one that these men hoped to escape from another deluge on the top of their tower.

There may be no great harm in these nursery-tales, but they become serious when the enemies of religion point to them as difficulties in the way of belief, and still more when they are brought forward by the friends of the Bible to prove the fanciful modern theory of the evolution of the intellect of man.

Thus the account of the Tower of Babel is supposed to prove the early childishness of man, who could think of building a tower to reach heaven, or high enough to escape the wrath of God.

Such an idea certainly never did enter the dreams either of the builders of Babylon or of the writer who records their work; but it has been instilled into the mind of many a Christian child in the nursery, and is found even in serious books written in this inquiring age.

Modern research, too, is daily bringing to light the evidences of a civilisation and amount of knowledge in the builders of the great cities, palaces, and towers of the ancient world, which prove them to have been by no means childish or ignorant, but, on the contrary, far better instructed in many of the arts and sciences than our forefathers during many ages of Mediæval and even Modern Europe.

And it may well make us a little more humble to reflect what an effort it cost Englishmen (not supposed to be far behind the rest of the modern world in the knowledge of the mechanical arts), not to make, but merely to carry one obelisk from the shores of Egypt to the Thames Embankment.

And yet such monoliths, and even larger ones, were made by the hundred, carried enormous distances, and erected where they have stood ever since by those men who are supposed to have known little or nothing about themselves or their surroundings.

The almost universal prevalence of these ideas about the building of the Tower of Babel is an instance of the vitality of many traditional and popular misconceptions in the interpretation of Scripture, for which there is not the slightest foundation in the original Hebrew, or even English words, and which the writer of these pages has attempted to remove.

The following sentence occurs in a work published as late as the year 1850, not for children in the nursery or at school, but for Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates, to help them in getting up the history of the Old Testament:—"After the death of Noah, the whole earth was of one language, and all the families journeyed from Armenia in the East to a plain in the land of Shinar, near Chaldæa, on the Euphrates. Here they commenced building a city and tower, afterwards called 'Babel,' *i.e.* Confusion, which

they presumptuously intended should reach the heavens" ("An Analysis and Summary of Old Testament History," by the author of "An Analysis and Summary of Herodotus," Oxford, J. Wheeler, &c.).

It would seem that some of these undergraduates must have been struck with the absurdity of this idea, and began to suspect that the builders of so renowned a city were unlikely to have been more foolish than the architects of the comparatively insignificant structures of modern Europe.

They took the trouble to read the words of Moses in the light of common sense, and the result has been a withdrawal of this interpretation, at first somewhat timid and apologetic, but at last complete, from almost all works on Bible history, and the substitution for it of the explanation that the words are evidently figurative, and simply mean "very lofty."

But what then was the purpose of these builders? The sacred writer tells us plainly—the acquisition of worldly glory and the centralisation of power: "Let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. xi. 4).

It would naturally be the most powerful of the three families of mankind who would wish to do this; and the account of the descendants of Ham given in the tenth chapter shows that they at first were far more numerous and powerful than their brethren.

It is probable, therefore, that they soon began to observe the tendency of the Japhetites to spread widely, and the preference of the Shemites for the nomadic life, and so either persuaded or compelled their weaker brethren to join with them in building a great city, to prevent them from spreading abroad.

But this was to attempt to defeat the Divine purpose implied in the blessing of Noah. "God blessed Noah and

his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." The word rendered "replenish" means to "overflow from abundance."

The neglect of this command, given also to Adam (Gen. i. 28), seems to have been one of the causes of the cruelty, oppression, violence, and fearful wickedness of the antediluvian world.

Instead of replenishing the earth, they seem to have all kept together in one part of the world, corrupted and corrupting one another, until the Flood suddenly came and destroyed them all.

The terrible cruelty and loathsome immorality which deform the character of the Hamites all through history, from the founding of Babylon to that of Tyre and Carthage, may perhaps be attributed in great measure to this excessive desire of worldly glory, and the centralisation of power by massing together dense populations and building enormous cities, temples, palaces, and towers.

It was, therefore, to prevent this fertile source of moral corruption, and to set the weaker Shemites and Japhetites free to follow their natural tendencies, that the miracle of the confusion of languages took place—a miracle of the nature and extent of which the Bible tells us nothing, but which had an obvious, wise, and merciful purpose, and which can present no difficulty to those who believe in that greater miracle of Pentecost, wrought to enable the faithful servants of the Lord God of Shem to invite every nation under heaven, so long scattered abroad, to come and dwell in their tents.

It would be well if we would remember that there are modern Babylons, and that the massing together of vast populations for the building up of colossal fortunes and towers of worldly renown, instead of judiciously and liberally helping them to colonise the fertile but unoccupied regions

of the earth, may bring upon us sooner than we expect judgments worse than any confusion of languages—judgments which invariably fall sooner or later where the religious principles and morals of a people are hopelessly corrupted.

The Tower of Babel was the first, but not the last or only worldly structure which has provoked the long-suffering vengeance of Heaven, and led to the scattering of mankind; and our Lord has summed up this moral law of God in the words first spoken of apostate Zion, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (St. Matt. xxiv. 28).

CHAPTER X.

REMARKS ON GENESIS XI. 27—L.

THE Book of Genesis, from chapter xi. 27, contains the family annals of Abraham and his children up to the death of Joseph. In studying this record of God's chosen people, we must bear in mind that it is apparently a selection and compilation of traditions, contained probably in writings preserved by the descendants of the Patriarch, and handed down to Moses, we may fairly conclude, through the instrumentality of Joseph.

Recent discoveries have proved beyond question that the primeval world was not so ignorant of the arts and sciences as we used to suppose, and especially it is certain that the art of writing was well known ages before the time of Abraham, not only in Egypt, where Joseph was prime minister and Moses was educated, but also among the nations on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, where Abraham was brought up.

It is, therefore, inconceivable that Egyptian Pharaohs and Assyrian and Babylonian conquerors should have taken care to have their exploits engraved on stones and bricks or written on linen and papyrus, but that Abraham and his descendants, the recipients of Divine revelations, should not have handed down to subsequent generations many written records of the more important occurrences connected with the family.

We should not expect these to be all alike either in style or substance, and it would be only natural that, like modern sermon-writers, they should exhibit a preference for one or another of the well-known Divine names. Neither can we tell at all in what language or by what kind of writing, whether ideographic or alphabetical, these records were handed down to Moses.

There is reason to believe, however, that Hebrew in some form was the language of Abraham ; and we know from our own experience how much the existence of sacred writings has to do with the preservation of a language. The unchanging customs also of Orientals must have given much fixity to any language spoken or written by them.

Thus we may feel sure that Moses had before him ample materials from which to compile this portion of the Book of Genesis. And so, having given under Divine guidance a brief account of earlier traditions concerning the origin of all things and God's primeval revelation of Himself to man in the first eleven chapters, he confines himself, during the remainder of his book, to a record of the family annals of his race.

In putting together these traditions—varying perhaps some of them slightly, even when recording the same events, just as we find varying accounts in the Gospels of the same important events in the life of Jesus Christ—Moses seems to have had in view objects very different from those of a mere uninspired historian.

His purpose is not to satisfy the curiosity of his readers, or even to form a continuous and consistent narrative, but, like the subsequent inspired compilers of the historical books of the Bible, to manifest the watchful care of Jehovah over His people and to give faithful portraits of the characters of men.

With this view he puts together the records of the events

which he selects in the order which suits his purpose, and that often not the true chronological order ; just as St. Luke purposely changes the order of our Lord's temptations, and the other Evangelists group together His sayings and miracles not always in connection with the same events.

This being the case, we may feel at liberty to attempt an arrangement of these narratives in that which seems in all probability to have been the true order and succession of the events recorded.

We find, for example, that, if we regard the narrative as chronologically continuous, Sarah must have been sixty-five years old when she captivated the Egyptians by her beauty, and so endangered the life of her husband. How much more natural it is to suppose that Moses places the story of Abraham's criminal weakness and timidity out of its proper chronological position, but immediately after the record of his great faith, in order to give a truthful picture of his character.

With this preface, let us attempt to give a brief summary of the events connected with Abraham and his descendants, from the birth of the great Patriarch until the death of Joseph, in that which seems to be the most probable chronological order of the events recorded.

Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldees, recently discovered to have been situated on what was then the head of the Persian Gulf. His father Terah was seventy at the time of his birth, and his brothers were Nahor and Haran. Haran, the father of Lot, died there, and there Abram married Sarai, who had no children when they left their native city. Terah, though, as will appear hereafter, a worshipper of the true God, also worshipped idols.

That he might be rescued from such superstitious practices, Abram was called, while living with his father, to leave his country and go into another land, there to become the

forefather of a great nation, and of the promised Saviour of the world.

Such a call must have been a terrible blow to the family and a sore trial to Abram's faith. But nothing is said about this. The Bible never glorifies its heroes. The call, however, is promptly obeyed, and the whole family naturally follow the future wanderer to the borders of the land of his exile.

They all migrate to Charan, "a frontier town of Babylonia, commanding both the roads and the fords of the Euphrates."[1] Here they must have remained long enough to acquire a great deal of property and many dependants (Gen. xii. 5); probably about forty years, and until the death of Terah.

Abram, being childless, seems almost to have adopted Lot, the son of his deceased brother.

Whatever Terah may have been, Abram and Lot were certainly nomads, owning vast flocks and herds, and dwelling in tents. And so they must have been compelled often to wander far from Charan in search of pasture.

It was probably during one of these expeditions to the south of Palestine, and while Sarai was still a young woman, that Abram was driven by a famine into Egypt, and there denied his wife, and again on a similar occasion in Gerar. And Moses purposely inserts these records of his criminal timidity and want of faith in the connections most suitable to exhibit a true portrait of the great Patriarch in his weakness and in his strength.

Upon the death of Terah—if with St. Stephen and the Samaritan text we consider that his age was 145; or before his death, if we accept the numbers of the Hebrew text, 205—Abram and Lot finally leave Charan, Abram being seventy-five years old, and Sarai sixty-five.

[1] "The Bible and Modern Discoveries," by Harper, pp. 3, 4.

But Abram still looked upon Charan as his own country, and regarded himself as an exile following the guidance of Jehovah. The rest of the family remained there, for it was to the city of Nahor that we find Abram long afterwards sending his servant to fetch a wife for Isaac; as we read, "Thou shalt go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Gen. xxiv. 4), and so the servant "arose and went unto the city of Nahor" (ver. 10). That the city of Nahor was Charan is evident from the fact that it was to Charan that Jacob went and served Laban, the son of Nahor, for his wife and flocks (xxviii. 10, and xxix. 4, 5).

Thus the exiled condition of the chosen family is recognised from the call of Abram up to the final migration of Jacob into Egypt, and even until the Exodus and triumphant entrance into Canaan after the death of Moses. And from these circumstances it also appears that Charan was not too far from the land of Canaan to admit of Abram's frequent wanderings for pasture as far as the south of Palestine during his long residence in Charan, at which time, as above suggested, we must suppose his denials of his wife to have taken place.

Continuing the narrative, we find the wanderers encamping at Shechem. Was this at that early date the name of a place? We cannot tell. Shechem is apparently a primitive noun signifying the shoulder. In Gen. xlviii. 22 it is used for a tract or portion of land; properly a ridge or hill. "I have given thee one portion (Shechem) above thy brethren." And so here it may mean a ridge or hilly tract, which later on in the history of Jacob may have given the name to a man and his city; as in English, hill, mount, mountain, may be either common or proper nouns. Moreh also has many significations as a common noun. At any rate, it is treacherous to found any argument concerning the

date of a book upon its supposed anachronisms in the names of places. How many Suttons, Thorpes, Woodlands, &c., are there in England?

It is no invention of a later writer, nor proof, as some critics suppose, of the later composition of the narrative, but the very natural remark of Moses that "the Canaanite was then in the land." He mentions this to emphasise the faith of Abram. When Jehovah appeared to him many years before, He told him "to go into a land which God would show him" (Gen. xii. 1). He has now come, under Divine guidance, not, as he must have expected, into some distant and unoccupied land, but into a land already in the possession of the powerful descendants of Canaan. How improbable it must have seemed that the children of this childless wanderer should ever be the owners of this land of his exile. But it is of this that Jehovah says, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. xii. 6, 7). The words are as emphatic as it is possible to make them. He does not say "a land," but "even the land, even this," as nearly as we can render it in English, as we should say 'this very land' now owned by the Canaanites.

He next encamps, not at Bethel, nor at Hai, but upon a mountain, the situation of which Moses could best describe as lying between the two places known by these names in his day, though not perhaps so early as the age of Abram. Here, as at Shechem, he builds an altar and calls upon the name of Jehovah.

After some wanderings, during which he and Lot have greatly increased the number of their flocks and herds, they come again to the same mountain where they had been on a previous occasion.

And here it is very important to remember that numerous stations where the wandering shepherds must have rested are not mentioned. Probably no record of them was pre-

served. At any rate, in this very compressed narrative, Moses selects for mention those only which have some important bearing on his subject, or tend to illustrate the providence of God or the characters of the Patriarchs.

And so this second encampment near Bethel is recorded because it was here that Abram and Lot found it expedient to part company, and because the circumstances of this parting bring out into strong contrast the characters of the two men—the noble generosity of the uncle and the imprudence of the nephew. Lot has all the land before him, but, attracted by its evident fertility, he unwisely "pitches his tent towards Sodom," although he must have known that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Gen. xiii. 13).

This encampment is also selected for mention because it was here that, after the departure of Lot, Jehovah confirmed and enlarged His promise to Abram. Encamped on a high mountain, he is commanded to look in every direction upon the land given to him and to his seed for ever—seed which is to be countless as the dust of the earth. Though "the Canaanite and the Perizzite then dwelt in the land" (ver. 7), it is given as an eternal inheritance to the innumerable descendants of the as yet childless wanderer. "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. xiii. 17).

The next station mentioned is near Hebron and the oaks of Mamre. It is impossible to say how long after the departure of Lot Abram came to this place. But this encampment is evidently mentioned for its connection with the episode of chapter xiv. In this chapter we find Abram in close alliance with three powerful Amorite sheikhs, Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner.

What caused this close alliance? Probably the invasion of Chedorlaomer, which also compelled Lot to leave his

tents and dwell in Sodom. The shepherds of the hilly districts could keep out of the way of the king of Elam's armies, which would probably conquer and exact tribute from the fortified cities; but Lot, in the plain of Jordan, could not so easily escape.

In this fourteenth chapter we have an extremely compressed narrative of events of the deepest interest, evidencing a state of things in Western Asia upon which the monumental records of Assyria have lately thrown much light. The country was partly occupied by nomadic tribes, while the dwellers in fortified towns were regarded as the owners of the land, or rather perhaps of the districts around their cities.

All Western Asia seems to have been divided into kingdoms ruled by petty princes, "a congeries of kingdoms," nominally and often really under the suzerainty of one of the great kings of Egypt, Elam, Babylonia, or Assyria. This state of things led to frequent rebellions and conspiracies of distant princes against the suzerain, and changes in the suzerainty. What an illustration of this we have in the episode of this chapter.

Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, is evidently the suzerain; but there has been an extensive effort made by his western and southern subject kings to throw off his yoke. The details of the narrative, though so much compressed, have all the marks of true history. The suzerainty of Elam is unquestioned for twelve years, then in the thirteenth year the yoke of Chedorlaomer is thrown off. He collects a mighty army of the kings, his neighbours, still faithful to him; then, having made all his preparations, he commences the reconquest of the rebels in the fourteenth year. The nomadic tribes, as already observed, seem to have been little affected by this. They doubtless occupied districts less accessible to the armies of Chedorlaomer, whose attacks

would naturally be directed against the fortified towns of the rebel kings. Having subdued most of these and re-established his suzerainty, he was naturally anxious to get back with his main forces as soon as possible to his own distant country. The captives and spoil would follow necessarily more slowly under an escort supposed to be sufficient. Abram hangs upon the rear of the retiring army and comes up with this band. With his own armed dependants and those of three other powerful sheikhs he watches them. Knowing every inch of the ground, these hardy shepherds choose their opportunity, surprise and overpower the escort, rescue and carry off the prisoners and spoils before the main body of the army know anything of what has happened. By the time the news of the rescue reaches the more advanced columns, Abram and his party are well on their way home and out of danger.

We have here, then, a simple and intelligible though very compressed account of events closely affecting the family of Abraham, and bringing out some admirable points in the character of the noble patriarch. The words of verse 17 need not be taken to mean that Abraham with his little force overtook and conquered Chedorlaomer himself and the main body of his retiring army. He had probably surprised and overcome the rearguard, not the vast host which had so lately defeated the armies of the five cities. Then the mention of the name Dan need not imply that this whole narrative was inserted in Genesis by a writer later than Moses. The original name, Laish, was so entirely lost sight of after the conquest of the district by the Danites, that its retention would have rendered the narrative in after times less intelligible; and so the name may have been changed to Dan by Samuel, or some later inspired editor of the book of Moses.

Kalisch suggests that we must understand the writer to

mention another Dan, distinguished as Dan-Jaan (2 Sam. xxiv. 6); and he adds, "It is a peculiar characteristic of our chapter to explain ancient names; thus we have the valley of Siddim, which is the salt sea (ver. 3); En-mishpat, which is Kadesh (ver. 7); the valley of Shaveh, which is the valley of the king (ver. 17). If, therefore, the northern boundary town were here intended, the text would probably have been, "Laish, which is Dan."

But is it absolutely certain that Dân in this passage is the name of a town?

The word occurs in the very next chapter as a verb, "That nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge" (Dân anoki, xv. 14). Dân as a verb is either the participle as above, or the perfect tense, the letters and pointing being exactly the same. As a verb it gave a name to the son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, the forefather of the Danites. "And Rachel said, God hath judged me . . . and hath given me a son; therefore she called his name Dân" (or he hath judged) (Gen. xxx. 6).

Then in this passage it is said, "he pursued unto Dân." But the word 'ad,' 'unto,' is often used with a verb for 'until,' with an implied purpose, as in Ps. cx. 1. "Sit thou on my right hand *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. cxii. 8). "He shall not be afraid *until* he see his desire upon his enemies." And so possibly it might be here; "he pursued until he had judged them," or punished them, or had judged the cause of his nephew. The word would then be used exactly as it is by Rachel.

Of course the context makes the ordinary translation, "unto or as far as Dan," much more probable, but the above suggestion may be worth considering.

But if the name Dan is supposed to suggest that this passage must have been written by some one living later

than Moses, what shall we think of the mention of Salem and its mysterious king?

There can be little doubt that Salem was the ancient name of the city known as Jerusalem in the days of Joshua (Kalisch on Genesis, p. 360); and its king, who was conquered by Joshua, though a very bad representative of Melchizedek, bore a very similar name, Adonizedek, Lord of Righteousness, a name to which he had no more right than many a "most Christian king" of modern times.

We could scarcely have stronger proof of the antiquity of the narrative than this mention of Melchizedek and Salem. Whichever way we look at it, it indicates a state of things of an earlier date, and widely different from that of the age of Moses or Joshua. The name of the city has changed at the time of Moses, and still more the character of the king and his people. Adonizedek is one of the kings of the Amorites, and four or six centuries have greatly changed the religion and character of these people, though their reigning sovereign still calls himself "righteous." The Amorites were on very friendly terms with Abram, and Melchizedek was not only the king, but also the priest of the true God to his subjects.

Thus in this account of the blessing of Abram by Melchizedek, a king and priest, and the honour shown to him by Abram, who pays him tithes of all, we catch a glimpse of the lingering glory of the primeval religion of the world. Of course, to those who do not believe in any primeval revelation, this will seem absurd. But those who accept the teaching of the Bible will believe that monotheism, or the knowledge and worship of the true and living God, the creator of all things, was not thought out by man as the result of some evolutionary process, but has been from the very beginning revealed.

This pure light of truth, however, has from the beginning

of the world to the present hour been in every age more or less hidden under clouds of error, superstition, and ignorance. And it was to counteract this tendency, and to keep alive a knowledge of the true God in a world rapidly falling away from Him, that Abraham was called to be the forefather of a chosen people, who should introduce the promised seed of the woman, the Redeemer and Regenerator of mankind. His teaching when He came is summed up in the words, "It was not so from the beginning." Pure religion is the religion of Eden, from which man has fallen and needs to be restored.

In Melchizedek, the king of righteousness, the king of peace, and the priest of his people, we have one of the last, if not the last, of God's witnesses of this primal truth, and so a type of that greater King of righteousness whose priesthood is eternal.

The narrative of this chapter having, then, such marks of antiquity stamped upon it, and giving a compressed description of events so entirely consistent with the historical testimony of Assyrian monuments, and being at the same time so little connected with the preceding and following chapters, we might concede, without in any way detracting from the general authenticity and genuineness of Genesis, that it may have been inserted by some later editor of the Book of Moses. There can be little doubt, however, that a story so graphic and consistent must have existed in the time of Moses in some written form, amongst the family annals of his race, from which he compiled the Book of Genesis. But whether he inserted it himself or some one who lived when the expression "from Dan to Beersheba" was familiar to every Israelite, the defender of the authenticity of Genesis need not feel bound to determine.

The events are historical, and the record of them came down to Moses from Abraham through Isaac, Jacob, and

Joseph. They were then in some form placed by Moses or some one soon after his time in that collection of the family annals of their race which forms the first book of the Bible, and which the Jews call *Bereshith* ("In the beginning"), but Christians Genesis, from its Greek title in the Septuagint, and which may well be rendered "the book of origins."

CHAPTER XI.

THE VISIONS OF ABRAHAM.

CHAPTER XV. contains the description of a vision in which the future of his descendants is more fully revealed to Abram, and the Egyptian oppression and the Exodus are predicted. The limits of the promised land are defined, and the names of the nations then owning it are given.

Then chapter xvii. records another visible appearance of Jehovah to him when he was ninety-nine years old. His name is changed from Abram, the High Father, to Abraham, the Father of a Multitude. The rite of circumcision is instituted. Ishmael, whose birth from Hagar has been described in chapter xvi., is also circumcised, being thirteen years old.

The episode of chapter xvi. records the failing of Abram's faith in consequence of the long time during which the fulfilment of God's promise of a child is deferred. In despair he weakly yields to Sarah's suggestion, and takes Hagar as a concubine, from whom Ishmael is born. This took place ten years after Abram had permanently left Charan (xvi. 3), when he was eighty-five years old (xii. 4). Ishmael, therefore, was born in the eleventh year. He was thirteen when circumcised, and thus about fourteen when Isaac was born (xvii. 25), Abraham being then a hundred.

In chapter xviii. we read again that Jehovah appeared to Abraham. Sitting in the door of his tent, he sees three men

coming to him. From the rest of the narrative it is clear that one of these is Jehovah, and that the other two are created angels. Thus we read in verse 22, "The men turned their faces, and went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah"; and then in xix. 1, "There came two angels to Sodom."

We are not told whether Abraham at the first knew that one of these mysterious strangers was Jehovah, but it is plain that he soon did so. And although the narrator says, in verse 9, "*They* said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife?" it is added directly after, "He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and Sarah thy wife shall have a son." And again, "Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh? . . . Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And He said, Nay; but thou didst laugh." The principal speaker is evidently Jehovah; and so, when the two angels have departed to Sodom, it is Jehovah, in visible form, who remains with Abraham, and with whom Abraham pleads for Sodom.

There are many of these Theophanies, or appearances the Angel of Jehovah, recorded in the Old Testament. He suddenly appears in the form of a man, and speaks with human voice, and yet declares Himself to be more than man, claiming, commanding, and receiving Divine worship, pronouncing Holy the very ground on which He stands. But He does not usually come or go as a man, but suddenly appears and as suddenly vanishes. But not only does this mysterious Being show Himself to the Patriarchs and make important communications to them, He is also called in the record and addressed by men as Lord and God.

Are these narratives true and historical records of events which really happened? They are so completely mixed up with the history and so clearly described, not as mere

visions, but as real events, that to doubt them is to doubt the historical character of the whole narrative which contains them. The Jews in our Saviour's time evidently believed them to be real events—"The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham," &c. (Acts vii. 2), and our Saviour confirms the record of Exod. iii. 2–6.

But do we believe that these were real manifestations in visible form of the invisible God? Many of us would perhaps feel difficulty in believing in such stupendous miracles, had we not every reason to believe in the very much greater miracle of the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God; and still more in His strangely mysterious appearances to His disciples after His Resurrection, so exactly resembling, in His sudden coming and phantom-like departure, the Theophanies recorded of old. And the resemblance extends even to the mysterious act of eating in the presence of His disciples, just as the Angel of Jehovah partakes of the hospitality of Abraham (St. Luke, xxiv. 41–43; Gen. xviii. 8).

And it is to be observed that these Theophanies occurred only when they were most needed, during the earlier periods of the existence of man, and at great crises in his history. The Angel of Jehovah visited and instructed the first man, and gave him a commandment. He appeared to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and a few others. Then upon the establishment of the kingdom, and the fuller development of the Mosaic system, these visible manifestations became less frequent or altogether ceased, and God communicated with His people by the mouth of inspired prophets. Having thus "with many different degrees of clearness, and in many different ways," spoken to the fathers by the prophets, He at last made the fullest possible manifestation of Himself in the Person of His Incarnate Son; (Heb. i. 2), the only Revealer of the Unseen; being "the

brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. i. 3). For says St. John, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (St. John i. 18).

Thus we see in the Bible just what we should expect, the Father gradually training His child to walk alone. Showing Himself at first externally and visibly; but training men by degrees to walk by faith and not by sight; withdrawing the external, visible evidences, just in proportion as He imparts more and more of the light of His inward and spiritual presence. And this accounts for the complete cessation of miracles upon the establishment of Christianity in the world. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, including as it does the gift of His Holy Spirit, and the founding of His Church, has finished the education of man, who is, therefore, no longer a child or a servant, but a full-grown man in the house of his Father. External evidences might in these days add to the condemnation of unbelievers, but would not convert them. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," or still more Jesus and His Apostles, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31; John xii. 10–11).

"Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 46, 47). A significant saying in these days of hazy belief in the writings of the Old Testament.

Chapter xix. records the destruction of the cities of the plain, and the escape and degradation of Lot, rescued indeed from death for the sake of Abraham, but not from temporal ruin, or from the taint—at any rate so far as his daughters were concerned—of the gross immorality of those with whom he had been so unwise as to live.

It is idle to speculate on the causes of the destruction of

these accursed cities. The idea that they were covered by the sea, or that the Dead Sea had its origin or even its enlargement at that time, is due probably to the tales of the crusaders and others, as there is not a word in the Bible, or in ancient history, or anything in the present state of that district to support it.

They were overwhelmed by some catastrophe, and Lot's wife, lingering behind, was caught and buried under some falling mass of salt.

They are not the only cities which have been suddenly overthrown and buried out of sight, and the miracle consisted, not so much in their destruction, which was doubtless due to natural causes, as in the fact that that destruction was plainly predicted and intended as the punishment of great sin.

Should we be justified, then, in regarding the sudden destruction of a city in these days as a proof of sin? Our Saviour teaches the contrary. The flood of Noah, the burning of Sodom, and the extermination of the Canaanites, being predicted and specially commanded, were intended to teach mankind the salutary lesson that God is in earnest, that He hates sin, and is determined to punish it. Further direct and immediate punishments of sin would interfere with man's free will; and therefore of all subsequent temporal evils, though men often bring them upon themselves, our Saviour says, "Suppose ye that these men were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (St. Luke xiii. 3).

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRIALS OF ABRAHAM.

CHAPTER XX. is an episode recording a repetition of the sinful weakness of Abraham in again denying his wife. As already stated, the crime was committed many years before, in the course of the Patriarch's wanderings from Charan, and when Sarah was still young. The careful reader will observe that it has little or no connection with the previous chapter, and still less with that which follows. If the event is recorded in its proper chronological position, Sarah must have been nearly ninety when she again endangered by her beauty her husband's life. If this was improbable when she was sixty-five, what must it have been when she was nearly ninety. No. The amazing faith of Abraham having been again recorded, this proof of his previous weakness is placed against it. Moses had before him the tradition of this sin, and he inserts it in the connection most suitable to his purpose.

Chapter xxi. describes the birth, circumcision, and weaning festival of Isaac, and the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. This event, so repulsive to the father, was brought about by the sinful jealousy of Sarah, but accomplished a Divine purpose in keeping select the chosen seed of Abraham; a purpose expressly revealed to the patriarch. Much compensation is at the same time promised to Hagar, whose son after this trouble is to be the forefather of a

great nation; a prediction which has been conspicuously fulfilled in the history of the world.

An interval of time, long enough for Isaac to become a young man of perhaps twenty-five years, intervenes between the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, and the great trial of Abraham's faith in Mount Moriah. This silence is broken only by the narrative of the thoroughly Oriental transactions between Abimelech and Abraham, ending in the oath between them which gave the name to Beersheba; after which we are simply told that "Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days" (xxi. 22–34).

Some critics make a difficulty about the age of Ishmael at the time of his expulsion, as though the writer spoke of him as a little child, whereas he was a lad of about fourteen years old or more.

It is not necessary to understand from Gen. xxi. 14–17 that Ishmael was a child, or that he was put on Hagar's shoulder, or that she cast him under a shrub. He is called *yeled*, often used, no doubt, for a child, but also for a youth. It is used of Joseph when seventeen years old (Gen. xxxvii. 30). He is also called *naar*, a boy or lad; the word used of Isaac at the time of his offering, and of the servants of Abraham on that occasion. And our translators so render it in verse 17—"And God heard the voice of the lad." Then she does not cast down the child; but simply leads him and lets him down under a bush. The verb means, no doubt, to cast down, but it is straining its meaning in this context to represent it as implying that the mother was carrying the child and threw him down. Doubtless the lad was nearly exhausted, and she led him to the bush, and in her anguish let him fall there.

And so the passage may be literally translated as follows: —"And Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread, and a skin-vessel of water, and gave them to Hagar, putting

them on her shoulder ; and the lad." That is, And he gave her the lad ; made her lead away the lad. It is absurd to suppose that he put the lad on her shoulder. "And she went and wandered" (lost her way) "in the wilderness of Beersheba." The verb used here almost always means "to wander," in the sense of "to err," "to go astray," "to lose one's way." Then, reduced to great distress in consequence of her stock of bread and water being exhausted, she takes the lad aside and lets him fall under the shade of a bush, and removes to a distance lest she should see him die. The whole story is thoroughly natural, and would suggest difficulties to no one in any book except the Bible.

We shall meet with another story about Isaac and the King of Gerar in chapter xxvi. Some modern critics like to make out that these two stories refer to one event, and are, as it were, different editions of the same traditional narrative, because in both we hear of Abimelech and Phicol, and a denial of his wife by the Patriarch.

But the sacred writer takes great pains to distinguish these two transactions from one another.

The stories are alike in some respects. The names Abimelech and Phicol occur again. But Abimelech, like Pharaoh, was evidently a dynastic name, meaning "Father-King," and Phicol answers to our prime minister, or commander-in-chief, meaning "mouth of all," or "all-commanding." The place, too, is the same, and Isaac, little profiting, like many another son, by the experience of his father, weakly imitates his sin by denying his wife. The oath of Isaac also, as well as that of his father, establishes for ever the name Beersheba.

All the other circumstances mentioned are different.

The famine is expressly distinguished from that which drove Abraham into Egypt. Isaac is specially commanded

not to go down into Egypt, but to dwell in Gerar. His wife is not taken from him, but when men ask him about her, he is afraid they mean to kill him to take her themselves. The king in Abraham's case took his wife from him and gave her back because God warned him in a dream.

The Abimelech of Isaac does nothing of the kind, but discovers accidentally the relation between him and Rebekah, and shows a much keener appreciation of the sinfulness of adultery than Isaac gave him credit for.

Then further on in the story the wells are plainly distinguished from those of Abraham which the Philistines had filled up.

Thus it is thoroughly uncritical to attempt to identify these stories. We might just as well say that our Lord performed only one miracle of feeding a multitude with a few loaves, but that the Evangelists have described the same one miracle so as to make it appear like two. And perhaps there are critics who would say this, had not our Saviour Himself mentioned the two miracles together on purpose to distinguish them from one another (St. Mark viii. 19).

But we must return to the history of Abraham contained in chapter xxii., the great trial of the Patriarch's faith.

We are not told what the age of Isaac was at the time of his father's trial, but it is evident that he was grown up, for he was strong enough to carry the wood for the sacrifice a considerable distance. We learn nothing of his age from the word rendered "lad," for it is the same as the word used of the servants of Abraham, and may signify any young person, from an infant to a young man of twenty or more. Nor is it important to know more than that he was what we should call a young man and not a boy.

The command comes to Abraham with startling suddenness, and seems to enjoin an act which would render quite impossible the fulfilment of God's promise concerning his

seed. The character of the command did not seem in itself quite so strange to Abraham as it does to us.

He knew that the gods of the heathen demanded, or were supposed to demand, such inhuman sacrifices from their worshippers. Later on in the history of Israel we read, "When the King of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him . . . he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall" (2 Kings iii. 27). And so to the mind of the Patriarch the command would seem to imply, "Thou fearest Jehovah, but wilt thou prove thy love by offering to Him a sacrifice equal to that which the heathen around thee offer to their false gods?" The trial was perhaps the greatest to which the mind and heart of such a man could be exposed, but not only or chiefly because it put a strain upon strong parental affection. There have been many fathers who have willingly given up their sons at the command of duty or honour. The general who, by his own act, allows his only son to lead the forlorn hope, knows something of one part of Abraham's trial, but only the smallest part. It was the terrible abyss which it seemed to open in the mystery of God's moral character. Can Jehovah be true and merciful? Is not this command utterly inconsistent with His promise? Can a God who makes this claim be otherwise than a cruel God, like the gods of the heathen?

Looked at in this its true light, the trial of Abraham is not wholly unlike that which tests the faith of the thoughtful in every age of the world. The faith of not a few indeed has been wrecked upon this rock, or hurried by their thoughts into an abyss of hopeless doubt. The lesson it teaches us is the same which it taught Abraham; "wait." The fulfilment of God's promises often seems impossible. His commands appear not seldom to render them even less possible. That which He does or allows to be done often

seems cruel, His chastisements uncalled for, His threats of future punishment inconceivable as coming from a God of infinite wisdom, power, and mercy. So it seems to us, and so doubtless at first it seemed to Abraham. But his example is meant to teach and encourage us. To patience, unquestioning obedience, and willing self-sacrifice, every mystery shall be solved in the end; for, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (Rev. x. 7).

We know absolutely nothing about the place where this sacrifice was offered. Nothing is said about any *Mount* Moriah. Abraham is told to go not to Mount Moriah, but into the *land* of Moriah, and there to offer his son on one of the mountains in that land. The tradition that it was afterwards the site of Solomon's temple, seems entirely destitute of any solid foundation. It was evidently some solitary place. But Jerusalem was not then a solitary place, but was in all probability the city of Melchizedek. And the omission of all allusion to this sacrifice in 2 Chron. iii. 1, seems to show that the writer of that passage could not have thought the Mount Moriah on which the temple was built the scene of the great trial of Abraham's faith. The words are, "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." The omission here of Abraham's sacrifice is surely very significant, and there is no other mention of Moriah.

The truth or falsehood, however, of this tradition, is of no more consequence than of that of the Samaritans, who assert that their Mount Gerizim was the true Moriah. All that we know for certain is that the land of Moriah was

about three days' journey from Beersheba, and that it was evidently a very lonely place.

The extreme reticence of the sacred writer as to the hidden, but long-protracted anguish of the father's heart, or the agonising wonder, and yet willing submission of the son, renders this simple narrative more touching than the most eloquent and affecting language of any uninspired author. It is difficult to read without emotion the simple question, "My father . . . Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" or the equally simple answer of faith, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb."

It is scarcely less difficult to realise the revulsion of feeling which must have followed when the trial was over, and when the eyes of the Patriarch were opened to discern something of the meaning of the transaction, and when he saw, however dimly and afar off, the sacrifice of Him who would not be rescued by twelve legions of His Father's angels from the bitterness of death, even the death of the cross. We know not how far was revealed to him the great truth afterwards expressed in the words, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (St. John iii. 16). But that he had some insight into the typical significance of the tragedy, seems to be implied in our Lord's words, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" (St. John viii. 56). And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews certainly regarded the whole transaction as full of typical meaning: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 17–19).

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ANTIQUITY OF GENESIS.

CHAPTER XXIII. gives a thoroughly characteristic narrative of Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah of Ephron the Hittite, for the burial of Sarah, who died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years.

The Hittites, or children of Heth, one of the sons of Canaan, are spoken of as the owners of that portion of land. And this statement is consistent with the results of the most recent discoveries.

The land is called in Genesis the land of Canaan, because it was occupied by the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. But it is now well known that at one time, and for a considerable time, the Hittites, or children of Heth, the son of Canaan, became the leading tribe, and formed a powerful Empire in Asia Minor and Syria, having their capital at Kadesh on the Orontes, and contending on equal terms with Egypt and other powerful neighbours.

There is perhaps scarcely any more convincing argument in support of the antiquity and historical accuracy of Genesis, than that which may be derived from a careful comparison of the account which it gives of the state of Canaan in the age of Abraham contrasted with that which is given in the last four books of the Pentateuch, and the book of Joshua.

Here in Genesis we have Abraham, the wealthy and honoured nomad sheikh, bargaining on the most friendly terms with a Hittite merchant, and recognising him as the

lawful owner of the portion of land in which he desires to purchase a burying-place for his wife. Just as before we have seen him recognising the superior dignity and sacredness of Melchizedek, the King of righteousness; probably the Amorite king of Jerusalem, the dynastic predecessor of Adonizedek, the Lord of righteousness, whom Joshua slew. And then when we open the Book of Joshua we find the land called the land of the Hittites.

How are we to account for this? By realising the fact that a vast interval of time intervenes between the age of Abraham and that of Moses and Joshua, at least four hundred years, and probably more. Think of four centuries in the development of nations! In the increase of populations! In the advance of civilisation! And, alas! too often, collateral with this, in the debasement of religious ideas and practices!

Read carefully the Book of Genesis, and then the rest of the Pentateuch and Joshua, and you seem to find yourself, so to speak, in two widely different atmospheres. It is quite inconceivable that any forger could have brought out this contrast with such wonderful and consistent accuracy. It is equally inconceivable that a Jew in the age of Ezra, and with the knowledge and ideas of a Jew of that age, could have put together the Book of Genesis and yet have preserved so completely the account of the facts which bring out this contrast in such a strong light. Its production as a fictitious narrative, or mere record of oral traditions in any age later than that of Joshua, is equally inconceivable. On only one theory could Ezra have succeeded in this task, a theory which the believer in the truth of Holy Scripture may willingly accept. He must have had before him contemporary written and authentic records of events from the age of Abraham to that of Joseph, or, in other words, he must have had before him in some form the written

materials of which the Book of Genesis consists; in fact, the Book of Genesis as it came down to him.

It may confirm our faith to trace out this contrast as regards—1. Population; 2. Civilisation; 3. Religion.

1. Four hundred years make a considerable difference in the population of a country. We are very apt to lose sight of this in studying history, especially the history of the Bible. Mountains really far apart seem quite close to one another when we look at them from a distance; and fixed stars, countless millions of miles from one another, seem almost touching in the fathomless abyss of space. It is just so with intervals of time in the remote past. We can appreciate what four centuries have done for our own nation, for Europe, and for America. Why should it not have done as much even for the extremely conservative East? Yes, we must make allowance, as regards manners, customs, and the slow development and comparative permanence of language, for the intense conservatism of the Oriental. But even the Oriental knows something of the increase of populations, and the rise and fall of great empires.

Now, it is evident that the population of Canaan was very scanty in the days of Abraham. There was plenty of room for him and Lot to wander wherever they pleased with their vast flocks and herds. But "the Canaanite was even then in the land." The powerful tribes descended from Canaan had settled there, built themselves cities, and were regarded as the owners of, at any rate, parts of the country, perhaps the districts around their cities. They were on friendly terms with Abraham. He is regarded as an important personage by Ephron, the Hittite; and on one occasion, after Lot had left him, we find him in close alliance with three powerful Amorite sheikhs—Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner.

What a very different state of things we find when we

come to the time of Moses and Joshua! Four hundred years have increased the family of Abraham into a great multitude, and filled Canaan with warlike and highly civilised nations, jealous of the slightest intrusion of a foreigner into their country.

2. For the contrast in the civilisation of Canaan is even more striking than the increase in its population.

While Abraham's seed were multiplying exceedingly in Egypt, the material civilisation of their future land was advancing with rapid strides, and the tribes of Canaan were preparing for God's people "goodly cities which they builded not, and houses full of all good things which they filled not, and wells digged which they digged not, vineyards and olive-trees which they planted not" (Deut. vi. 10, 11).

The account of the land, where Abraham had been the honoured friend of Amorite sheikhs and of a Hittite merchant, which the twelve spies brought back to Moses, was that of a country "flowing indeed with milk and honey," that is, rich and well cultivated, but in which "the people were strong," and "the cities great and walled up to heaven" (Numb. xiii. 28; Deut. i. 28).

Of the causes of this growing civilisation Holy Scripture tells us nothing. "Of the progress or affairs of these nations in the 430 years the Bible is silent. Egyptian records help us somewhat. Glancing at them, we may now see how God prepared the way—the future homes of the Israelites. While they were in bondage in Egypt, the Hittites, allied with other tribes, resisted the progress of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who at one time had overrun Canaan even to Lebanon. . . . These Hittites were a great and powerful race, as all Egyptian inscriptions show. Their solid sovereignty was broken by the Egyptians, and so we find in the days of Joshua that the country of Palestine was ruled over by many kings or petty kinglets, sheikhs of tribes, who

represented that once great empire which is now known as Hittite. . . . So while the Israelites were in bondage a great empire had grown up in Canaan. That empire was shattered by the Egyptians (by Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the oppression), and it was therefore only its broken fragments that Joshua had to encounter" (Harper, pp. 179, 180).

The high state of civilisation still remaining after these inroads of the Egyptians may be seen "from a record left by an Egyptian military officer, who traversed the country shortly before its conquest by Joshua. He goes as far as Aleppo in a chariot. . . . He shows a country full of cities, with riches and temples, kings, soldiers, scribes, chariots and horsemen, artisans and traders. All the Egyptian records of Canaan prove a high state of civilisation: enormous flocks of sheep, horses, goats; huge quantities of corn, figs, vines, precious stones, gold, chairs of gold, tables of ivory, of cedar; oil, wine, incense, dates, implements of warfare, armour, and a galley" (Harper, p. 203, 4).

And from this we may see that Moses, as an educated Egyptian, must have been well acquainted with the state of Palestine in his day. The frequent intercourse which went on between Egypt, Palestine, and Syria at that time, must have made him familiar with the names of the towns and nations of that land which was promised of old as the possession of his people.

Such was the state of civilisation in Canaan when Joshua conquered it. Long continued and internecine wars, frequent invasions, and cruel oppressions of apostatising and degraded Israel, soon reduced it to the state of desolation in which we find it in the time of the Judges—another period of 400 years, and probably more.

And to this destruction of civilisation and relapse into chaos, which has been compared to the state of things

in Europe which followed the disruption of the Western Empire, the countless and gigantic ruins of the land are bearing a silent but ever-growing testimony. We know not what interval of time separated the age of Joshua from that of Samuel, but it cannot have been less than another 400 years. But we know what 400 years did for Europe, and so can understand how rapidly a land of high civilisation may sink back into utter barbarism if reduced to a state of violence and anarchy. Well might the Psalmist write, "Neither destroyed they the heathen, as the Lord commanded them; but were mingled among the heathen and learned their works. . . . Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance. And He gave them over into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them were lords over them" (Ps. cvi. 34). And therefore "a fruitful land made He barren, for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein" (Ps. cvii. 34).

The spade of the explorer is daily bringing to light fresh and fresh unquestionable evidences of the existence of these great changes in the civilisation of Canaan. The gigantic walls of the cities of Joshua's age are found underneath the remains of mere stone huts, and then above them the later walls of the times of the kings of Israel and Judah, indicating clearly the great breach in the civilisation of Canaan which intervened between its first occupation by the Israelites and the rise of the kingdom of Saul.[1]

3. But what shall we say of the contrast in the state of religious belief and practice exhibited between Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch and Joshua?

The religious belief and practice of Abraham we must

[1] See "Tell El Hesy or Lachish," by W. M. Flinders Petrie Palestine Exploration Fund (Watt, 2 Paternoster Square).

remember is that to which Christ and His Apostles would recall both the Jews and the Gentiles of their day; the simple, pure, and spiritual worship of the One Living and true God, the Maker and Ruler of all things in heaven and earth; a worship encumbered with no ceremonies, except apparently that of the occasional offering of sacrifice, and involving the most perfect trust in the invisible God, revealed in the personal Jehovah, and prompt obedience to His commands at any cost. This was, in fact, the primeval religion of the world, as revealed to man from the beginning, flowing naturally from the relation existing between God and man. This is indeed the essence of Christianity, which adds only a fuller revelation of the triune nature of God, and a more perfect manifestation of the personal Jehovah in the incarnate Son of God, the Man Christ Jesus, and in Him the fulfilment of the original prophecy of the destruction of man's enemy by a Son of Man.

The history of religion which the Old Testament gives us is consistent with almost universal experience.

A careful study of the religions of the world soon leads us to these two conclusions:—

1. That a religion invariably appears more and more pure as we trace it back to its original founder.

2. That the purer a religion is at its commencement, the greater and more rapid is its subsequent corruption.

This is exactly the view of things which Genesis gives us, especially when we compare it with the rest of the Pentateuch and with the books of Joshua and Judges.

Abraham is not presented to us as the founder of the worship of the One Living God, but as its reformer. We read, indeed, in Joshua xxiv. 2, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the river in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and served other gods." But we greatly misunderstand these words if we take them

to imply that Terah was not a worshipper of the true God. We might just as truly say that Romanists are not worshippers of God and Christ because they also worship the Virgin and the saints, and regard images and relics with the same superstitious reverence as the Israelites regarded the brazen serpent in the days of Hezekiah, and Laban attached to the images which Rachel stole and hid from her father in Jacob's tent. The words mean that Terah added to the worship of Jehovah a superstitious veneration for supposed superhuman powers, and the representation of them by visible symbols or images. Is this contrary to experience in any age of the world, or in any religion of the world, not excepting Christianity itself?

That Terah worshipped the true God is clear from the words of his grandson Laban when he made a covenant of peace with Jacob; for he calls upon him to swear by the God of Terah, saying, "The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father judge between us" (Gen. xxxi. 53).

But we have other proofs in Genesis that the knowledge of the true God, as supreme Lord of heaven and earth, prevailed widely in the days of Abraham, though many were adding to His worship the worship and service of other gods.

The Pharaoh of his day, though no doubt a worshipper of many gods, is very different from the Pharaohs of Moses and Joshua. He acknowledges the authority of the God of Abraham, and shows abhorrence of the sin of adultery (Gen. xii. 17–20). The same is apparent in the case of Abimelech in Gerar, although Abraham thought, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Gen. xx. 11); and in the case of Isaac afterwards in the same place (Gen. xxvi. 7).

It is certain indeed that the primeval religion of the world, as exhibited by the example of Enos, Enoch, and Noah, had been fearfully corrupted in the days of Abraham, and in

some parts the very grossest immorality prevailed. But this appears side by side, as in Christian times, with an acknowledgment of the existence and authority of the one Supreme Ruler of the world. And in the case of Melchizedek we have the plainest proof that Abraham was not the founder of the true worship of God. This mysterious personage, belonging to a different family and probably to a different race, is recognised by Abraham as his superior, and as being not only a king, but also a priest of the Most High God.

Contrast all this with the state of Egypt and Canaan in the time of Moses, and the composition of Genesis in any age later than that of Moses, or from any materials other than contemporary writings of the Patriarchs, will appear in the highest degree improbable. And this contrast is all the more striking when we observe that it is brought out by no direct statement, but from the inferences which we cannot help drawing from the casual mention of incidents which testify to its existence.[1]

And we must not forget that we have also one of the

[1] "The early books do not exhibit, like the Psalter, the close inner contact of the individual soul with the Deity; and, as water does not rise above its source, it is hard to ascribe to them alone the wonderful development of that principle which pervades the body of this unparalleled collection. We seem compelled to assume for them some loftier fountain-head of instruction. This, I would submit, is in part supplied, and in part suggested, by the Book of Genesis. I say suggested, inasmuch as the outlines of a pure moral religion drawn in that book are not less slight than they are significant; so slight, indeed, that I have been unable to resist the impression that there were supplementary communications of Divine truth over and above those contained in Holy Writ. . . . And I also say supplied, inasmuch as the story of the Fall involves in full the idea of a restoration in character as well as condition, which is nowhere enunciated in the Law; and further, inasmuch as it sets forth, at least down to the time of Abraham, a pleasant intercourse, habitual and direct, with the Deity, and one pointing onwards to the great Redemption."—*The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, by W. E. Gladstone, p. 127.

long periods of silence, of which there are so many in Scripture, intervening between the early part of the eleventh and the twelfth chapter of Genesis, between the age of Noah and that of Abraham. We know not how long this period was; but there are many reasons for thinking that it was very long; so that whether we look backwards or forwards, we find the state of religion exhibited in Genesis, from the call of Abraham to the death of Joseph, entirely consistent with what we should expect under the circumstances. We find the knowledge of the God of Noah lingering in more or less purity and clearness in some parts and among some families side by side with the growth of idolatry and superstition, rendering necessary the separation of Abraham from his father's home, and in other parts a development of immorality so hideous as to call down the judgment of God upon the sinners and their cities.

CHAPTER XIV.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB.

CHAPTER xxiv. gives an account of the marriage of Isaac, and brings out very clearly the fact already mentioned, that Charan was not very far from the land in which Abraham wandered, and was still recognised by him as his proper country. "Thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Gen. xxiv. 4). And so Rebekah, the grand-daughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother, becomes the wife of Isaac, who marries her when he was forty years old, three years after his mother's death.

Chapter xxv. 1–11 finishes the history of Abraham. No mention had been made before of Keturah, one of Abraham's concubines; but it is evident that he must have married her before the birth of Isaac, and probably very long before. The common explanation is very unsatisfactory. It is not at all likely that he would have married another wife after the death of Sarah, when he must have been 137 years old. It is far more probable that the Hebrew verbs should here be translated as pluperfects, thus: "Now Abraham had added and had taken a wife, and her name was Keturah"—a Hebraic way of saying that he had taken an additional wife besides those already mentioned, Hagar and Sarah.

And here it is especially important to remember that

countless events connected with the long wanderings of Abraham as a stranger in the land of Canaan are passed over in silence. Just those are mentioned which had some important bearing upon the object before Moses in making this compilation. As examples of these intentional silences we may observe the stations or encampments mentioned. These must have been very numerous. If Abraham was 175, or even 155 at his death, he must have been for at least eighty years wandering as a shepherd in Canaan. He goes through "the length and breadth of the land" (xiii. 17). "He sojourns long in the Philistines' land" (xxi. 34). And yet, out of hundreds, not half-a-dozen encampments are mentioned in all that time. And thus there had been no occasion to mention Keturah before; but now it is necessary to do so, because an account is to be given of that which we may call Abraham's will. He had more than one concubine, but their children were to be kept quite separate from Isaac, the chosen forefather of the chosen seed. And so their children are sent away eastward with gifts, but his residuary legatee is Isaac; for "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac." And then we are told that "Abraham died and was buried in Machpelah by his sons Ishmael and Isaac," the other sons having been sent away during his lifetime (ver. 6).

But what was Abraham's age at the time of his death? Sarah died at the age of 127, when Abraham must have been 137. Three years after this, Isaac marries Rebekah, when Abraham, therefore, was 140. Rebekah has no children for twenty years, for Isaac was sixty when Esau and Jacob were born.

But the events recorded in chapter xxvi., the episode of Isaac's denial of his wife and his strife with Abimelech about the wells, must have happened before the birth of Rebekah's children, and while she was a young woman, and yet after

the death of Abraham, for this is implied by the words, "The famine that was in the days of Abraham" (ver. 1); and again, "Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham" (ver. 18). Is it not, therefore, probable that, as in the case of Terah, so in this record of the age of Abraham, some error must have been caused by the copyist, and that Abraham must have died shortly after the marriage of Isaac, when he may have been about 145 or 155, rather than 175?

From. vers. 12 to 18 we have an episode giving an account of Ishmael's descendants and his death. With ver. 19 begins the history of Isaac, whom God blesses after the death of Abraham (ver. 11).

At forty years old he marries Rebekah, and Jacob and Esau are born when he is sixty, probably, as we have seen, after the death of Abraham. Vers. 27 and 28 give a general sketch of the two boys with reference to their subsequent history and different characters.

When they were boys we have the account of Jacob's first treacherous act in purchasing his brother's birthright. It is absurd to suppose that they were grown-up men at this time. They were probably about fifteen or sixteen years old, and so their father would have been seventy-five or seventy-six.

Chapter xxvi. contains the account of Isaac's weakness in denying his wife, evidently inserted here, as already suggested, out of its proper chronological place; for had Isaac's children been born, there could have been no mistake about Rebekah being his wife.

Verse 34 gives us some idea of the probable age of Jacob when he deceived his father. Esau, we are told, married when he was forty, and it is evident that the deception of Isaac followed not very long after this, and therefore when Isaac was a little more than a hundred (see xxviii. 6–9).

It is a mistake, which raises a quite unnecessary difficulty, to represent Isaac as on his deathbed, as some critics affirm. There is not a word to justify this statement. He very properly wishes to appoint one of his sons to inherit the blessing of Abraham, and naturally desires to make his eldest and favourite son his heir. Like any other man more than a hundred years old, he might well say, "I am old, and I know not the day of my death." This is scarcely the language of a man who felt that he was dying. He was old and blind, and possibly weak and ill; and this total blindness accounts for our hearing so little about him, or of any activity of life afterwards. However long he lived, he seems to have lived in the most perfect quietness, as a blind old man might well do, at Mamre near Hebron. Esau was already married, being forty years old, but Jacob was not yet married; and so it is probable that the twin brothers were not much over forty when Jacob listened to the wicked suggestion of his mother.

The cruel sin of Rebekah and Jacob brought down upon the mother the loss of the society of her beloved son, and upon that son a lifelong punishment most terrible to one of his temperament; and Esau, by far the finest character of the two, was compensated for the loss of privilege by far greater worldly prosperity than his treacherous brother.

It is an ignorant libel on the character of the Old Testament to say that the duplicity of Jacob is condoned. The supplanter of his brother and the deceiver of his father might well say to Pharaoh in Egypt that his days had been "few and evil" (xlvii. 9). As the land of Canaan was not afterwards given to the children of Israel because of their righteousness, for they were a stiff-necked people, so neither was the privilege of being the forefather of these chosen people bestowed upon Jacob for any superiority over his

brother, but for reasons quite irrespective of merit, which are known only to Him who rules the world.

And this explains the language of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, especially what he says about God's election to religious privileges being altogether disconnected with human merit, and entirely a matter of God's free choice (Rom. ix. 11–13). And it is obvious that the fact of being born of Gentile or Jewish parents, or, in these days, in a Christian or heathen land, cannot have anything to do with the merit of the child, though doubtless giving it very widely different privileges in this life. It would indeed be a libel on the character of God to suppose that it involves any difference of condition hereafter, "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. ii. 9–12).

We have again, in the case of these twin brothers, an evidence of the superior religious advantages afforded by the pastoral mode of life. Superstitions, idolatries, and immoral practices are in Genesis represented as developing more rapidly among those races who gave up the quiet of pastoral life for more exciting pursuits, and also among the dwellers in cities. This is thoroughly natural, and just what we should expect; but it is scarcely the feature in the picture of primeval times which would have been so consistently traced out by a writer later than Moses, or by any compiler of mere traditions, or composer of a fictitious narrative among the captives in Babylon or in the age of Ezra. And this taste for the quiet pastoral life may account for the selection of Jacob as the forefather of the chosen people in preference to his more generous-minded but more restless brother. From the call of Abraham to enter upon the wandering life of a shepherd down to the death of Jacob, we find this preference given to a mode of life so well suited to religious meditation and to the reception of divine revelations.

With chapter xxviii. commences the history of Jacob. The punishment swiftly follows upon his sin. The smothered wrath of the deeply injured Esau could not be hidden from the conscience-stricken mother. Isaac was certainly not on his death-bed, but he was so old and blind and feeble, that there was reason to believe that he might not live very long. His death would untie the hands of Esau, and so Rebekah hastens to provide against that contingency by getting her favourite son as soon as possible out of danger. She urges him to flee to Charan, and devises a scheme by which she might persuade the aged father to send him there at once. He must not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but of the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother.

And here again we have one of those telling silences of inspired Scripture. What agonising scenes must have followed the treacherous crime! We are told, indeed, that Isaac "trembled exceedingly," and that Esau "cried out with a great and exceeding bitter cry." Two powerful strokes of the artist, which suggest a dark and terrible domestic picture to the imagination of the reader.

It must have been an awful time for this family, especially for those two, whose consciences must have been stung with the scorpion of self-condemnation and a terrible fear of the vengeance which was to follow. The conscience of Isaac, also, cannot have been altogether at rest. He knew that Jacob, the mother's favourite, was divinely selected as the forefather of the chosen race. He knew that Esau had shown a profound contempt for this high privilege; and yet he cannot bear the thought of his favourite being supplanted by him who, from a significant event at his very birth, had been named Jacob the supplanter. And now by means of a vile conspiracy he has been made the unwilling instrument of the accomplishment of a Divine prediction and purpose. And this accounts for his confirmation of

the blessing, even after he found that it had been won from him by fraud. He recognises in it the hand of Him who brings good out of evil; of Him who needs not indeed our sins for the accomplishment of His purposes, and yet frequently brings them about by the free wills of men both good and bad—a truth soon to be illustrated by the history of Joseph, and still more in that conspiracy of evil which accomplished the death of Jesus for the salvation of the world. Indeed it is difficult otherwise to account for Isaac's persistence in the blessing of Jacob after his discovery of the trick which had been practised upon him.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HISTORY OF JACOB.

The narrative of Jacob's flight and adventures in Charan and its neighbourhood in the service of Laban suggests no historical difficulties, and covers a period of twenty years.

It is a mistake to think that we are called upon to justify his conduct while with Laban, either as regards his matrimonial affairs or his service, or to think that Holy Scripture condones his faults. The sacred writer gives a very compressed but plain account of the whole matter, neither justifying Jacob nor condemning Laban, but leaving them to our judgment. It is a thoroughly Oriental picture of a father-in-law and his son-in-law trying to circumvent one another. The treachery began with Laban in the case of the marriage of Leah; and all through Laban seems to have been the worst offender. He changes Jacob's wages ten times, of which changes a few only are mentioned. Jacob still stands before us as the supplanter, and in the end the successful supplanter, but also as the deceiver punished by the deceit of others, his sin continually finding him out. He attributes, indeed, the success of his schemes to the Providence of God taking his part against the greater treachery of Laban, as one more sinned against than sinning. And this is expressed in his dream, recorded in chapter xxxi. 10, in which God commands him to return to his old home with Isaac. This command is mentioned by antici-

pation in verse 3. He recounts this dream to his wives for their encouragement when he wants to persuade them to leave their father secretly.

Jacob then returns homewards, and on the road meets and becomes reconciled to his brother. This last, like almost all the incidents of his checkered life, proves him to be still the same suspicious, crafty, if not deceitful man. But the dream at Penuel probably marks a great crisis in the development of his religious character, perfecting his real conversion to God, and encouraging him to fight more resolutely for the future against his besetting sin. When the brothers part, Esau goes towards Seir, and Jacob journeyed and made himself a somewhat more permanent encampment at some place we know not where, which for that reason was called Succoth (xxxiii. 16, 17). And here he probably dwelt for a considerable time, for he built himself a house and made booths for his cattle.

Thus we have a continuous, though very compressed, narrative of Jacob's fortunes from the time of his flight from his brother's wrath until his final reconciliation with him twenty years later. Meanwhile Isaac, blind and helpless, was living a perfectly retired life at Hebron.

At xxxiii. 17 the narrative is broken off abruptly, and we have an episode which has little connection with that which precedes it, but is inserted by Moses evidently in consequence of the meaning which it gives to the words spoken afterwards by Jacob on his death-bed concerning Simeon and Levi: "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. xlix. 7).

That we are beginning an entirely fresh extract is evident from the language of xxxiii. 18, which should be translated, "Now Jacob came safely (lit. in peace or in safety) to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when

he came from Padan-aram." This expression, "when he came from Padan-aram," would never have been used if the compiler had wished us to understand that Jacob moved from his comparatively permanent residence in Succoth to the city of Shechem; and so we cannot at all say when the destruction of Hamor's city took place.

We are not told when or how long Jacob and his sons dwelt in Shechem, on the land which he had purchased, apparently with the intention of remaining there some time; but he leaves the place in consequence of the misconduct of his daughter and the cruel revenge of his sons.

After this Jacob is commanded to go to Bethel and dwell there, and to build an altar in memory of his vision of the ladder seen there when he was fleeing from Esau (Gen. xxxv. 1).

And here again we have mention of the superstitious practices of those still worshipping the true God. These strange gods were probably images and magical charms. Jacob takes them away and buries them at Shechem.

He journeys in fear of the consequences of his sons' cruel and treacherous conduct; but God saves him by inspiring the inhabitants of the other neighbouring cities with terror, and so he comes to Bethel or Luz.

It is a misconception and an unnecessary puzzle to identify entirely Luz and Bethel. Joshua xvi. 2 evidently shows them to be distinct. In the time of Joshua, Bethel was probably one town and Luz was another. They were very near, though not identical, for the border of Joseph passed "from Bethel to Luz" (Josh. xvi. 2). But the two towns being thus originally near, seem, like many modern cities, to have extended so as to reach one another, still retaining their original names, like London and Westminster. At any rate, it is clear that the old name still clung to the city from the fact that "the house of Joseph went up against Bethel," and

took it through the treachery of one of the inhabitants, whose life they spared, and who then went "into the land of the Hittites, and built a city which he called Luz, after the name of his own city" (Judges i. 22–26).

From Joshua xviii. 13 it would seem that of the town which we may call Luz-Bethel, Bethel was the southern portion. "And the boundary went over from thence towards Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward." Then we read of "Mount Bethel" (Josh. xvi. 1). This no doubt was the mountain on which Abraham encamped and built an altar, which was not in any town, but on a mountain well known in the days of Moses and Joshua, and one which could be best described as lying between the place afterwards called Bethel and the town of Ai. It would seem that the place where Jacob slept when he was benighted on fleeing from his home was not a town, but a lonely spot near the city of Luz, and that he named the whole district round Luz Bethel, the House of God, in remembrance of his dream. It is not said that he named any city at all, but that "he called the name of that place Bethel." Of the city with which the name was afterwards identified, the writer says, "But the name of that city was called Luz at the first" (Gen. xxviii. 19), or more literally, "And yet Luz *was* the name of the city formerly." It is not called that city, but simply the city, *i.e.*, the city near the place where he rested; and perhaps the word rendered "formerly" might be translated "principally," as it sometimes is in other connections.

He comes again, then, after leaving Shechem, to Bethel, which, we observe, the writer still calls Luz. And here again he builds an altar, calling the place now not only Bethel, but El-Bethel, the God of Bethel; that is to say, the God who appeared to me in this place, which I then named Bethel or the house of God (xxxv. 6, 7).

Here Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, dies, and is buried below Bethel, under an oak, which is therefore called Allon-bacuth, the oak of weeping.

How much we learn from this 8th verse! It implies that Jacob's mother was now dead, and that her faithful old servant had come, after her death, to comfort the exiled son in his trials. The mention of his great sorrow upon her loss brings out a touching trait in the, in some respects, unamiable character of Jacob. It also reminds us how in another way his sin found him out, and how his early crime separated him for ever from the mother whom he loved.

How easily we pass over the brief record of this simple incident; and yet how many affecting domestic scenes it brings before the imagination of the thoughtful reader!

At ver. 9 the narrative is broken to admit the insertion of incidents which had previously happened at this Bethel, where Jacob now was, or elsewhere. The narrative is not resumed again until the 16th verse. Is this an extract from some writing in the possession of the compiler of Genesis, inserted here in consequence of its connection with Bethel? or is it a parenthesis composed by Moses in order to supply incidents previously omitted, but which ought to be mentioned in this summing up of the history of Jacob up to the time of his father's death, and before the beginning of the narrative of Joseph? At any rate, careful consideration will remove much of the abruptness which appears in the present versions.

A Hebrew speaker could doubtless distinguish between the perfect, pluperfect, and imperfect tenses by his pronunciation, as we can distinguish in speaking, but not in writing, record from recórd, éntrance from entránce, or précedent from precédent; but a Hebrew writer had only one form for past time. And so, when the context requires it, the Hebrew perfect must be rendered by the English pluper-

fect or imperfect, and, in fact, frequently is so. Let us try this on the passage before us, remembering also the very many English conjunctions for which the Hebrew conjunction has to do duty, thus: "Now God had appeared unto Jacob again, when he had come out of Padan-aram, and had blessed him. And God had said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. And so he had called his name Israel." Where did this happen? Perhaps at Penuel, or more probably at this very Bethel where he now was, on some previous occasion not before mentioned; for countless incidents in the history of Jacob are most certainly omitted. Then verses 11, 12, and 13 contain the words of God's blessing, so often repeated to the Patriarchs.

Again, since the compiler of Genesis knew that the name Bethel had been given when Jacob first left his home, the pluperfect must be used in ver. 15 thus: "Now Jacob had called the place where God spake with him (where he had seen the vision of the ladder, and where he had received much the same blessing as that here given in vers. 11, 12) Bethel."[1]

Verses 16–20 narrate the death of Rachel, the beloved wife, on giving birth to her second son, whom she calls in her dying words Benoni, son of my sorrow, changed by Jacob to the name of better omen, Benjamin, son of

[1] It is surprising how many difficulties in the interpretation of these ancient Hebrew records disappear when we remember that Moses could not express in writing any distinction whatever between the relation of times which we can show by the use of the imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect tenses. Thus Schroeder writes on the syntax of the verb, Rule 45, "Since to the Hebrews, in the finite verb, there were only two tenses, perfect and future, and these were not inflected to express different moods, it was necessary that the uses of each should be more widely extended, and determined by the context."

the right hand. She is buried in Bethlehem Ephrathah, the predicted birthplace of Him who is "the Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2).

On his way to Hebron, he encamps at the tower of Edar, an encampment apparently selected for mention as being the place where the incestuous crime of Reuben was committed; supposed by some to be the evil report brought by Joseph to his father.

But there is no proof of this. We are only told that "Israel heard it." But if Joseph, then a little boy, reported it, as a very young child might easily have done, scarcely understanding what had taken place, the conduct of Reuben, in endeavouring to rescue him about ten years after, is naturally that of one thoroughly ashamed of his previous misconduct, yet restrained by fear from resisting the will or exposing the sin of his brothers.

How affecting, too, in connection with this is the language of Reuben, spoken in the hearing of Joseph in Egypt: "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? Therefore behold, also his blood is required!" Well might Joseph "turn himself about from them and weep" (xlii. 24).

Verses 23–26 give the names of the twelve sons of Jacob. The birth of Benjamin having been already recorded, he is naturally mentioned with the rest, although he was not born in Padan-aram, as all the others were.

Jacob, then, comes home after his long absence, and some little time after—we are not told how long—his father dies, and is buried by Esau and Jacob. What was his age? Can he possibly have been, as here stated, 180 years old?

Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah, and Esau and Jacob were born twenty years later, when Isaac therefore was sixty.

Esau married Hittite wives when he was forty. After this, and apparently not very long after, Jacob deceived his father and fled to Charan. Let us assume that this happened five years after Esau's marriage with the Hittites. Then Isaac would have been 105; forty when he married, sixty when Esau and Jacob were born, 100 when Esau married, 105 when Jacob deceived him and fled.

Jacob was with Laban twenty years, and about the end of the fourteenth year Joseph was born (xxx. 24, 25); and so Joseph must have been about six or seven when Jacob left Charan. He was seventeen when he was sold into Egypt (xxxvii. 2); he was thirty when made Pharaoh's minister, just before the seven years of plenty (xli. 46); and it was at the beginning of the third year of the famine that Jacob came into Egypt (xlv. 6).

Now it is quite certain that Isaac was dead before Jacob went into Egypt, and if Joseph was thirty-nine at the beginning of the third year of the famine, and seven when he came with his father to Canaan, we have an interval of thirty-two years between the return of Jacob to Canaan and his going into Egypt.

At some time, then, during the interval Isaac must have died. If, therefore, Isaac was 105 when Jacob deceived him and fled, he would have been 125 when Jacob left Charan, and so could not have been more than 157 had he lived until Jacob went into Egypt. But he was dead before this—we don't know how long before. A good many events happened between the time of Jacob's reconciliation with Esau after leaving Charan and the burial of Isaac—the residence at Succoth; the misconduct of Dinah and her brothers at Shechem; the burial of Rebekah's nurse at Bethel; the birth of Benjamin and death of Rachel at Bethlehem-Ephrathah; the sin of Reuben at Edar. It is only after the record of all these events that we read of the

death and burial of Isaac in Hebron. From the fact that there is no further mention of Isaac after the selling of Joseph, we may infer perhaps that he died before Joseph was seventeen. Let us assume that he died just before this, or ten years after Jacob left Charan. This would make him 135 at the time of his death. Or if the deception of Jacob took place ten years after Esau's marriage with the Hittites, instead of five, as we have assumed, and when Jacob therefore was fifty, Isaac would have been 140 instead of 180 when he died. But the earlier age is much the more probable.

It is clear, therefore, that in this case, as in many others, some error must have occurred in copying the numerals, either those which give the age of Isaac, or those which are connected with his age at his marriage and the other events above mentioned.

Before beginning the history of Joseph in Egypt, the writer inserts an episode giving an account of the descendants of Esau, the forefather of the Edomites, or Idumæans, as they were afterwards called.

Some difficulties suggest themselves when we read this episode. The names of Esau's wives are different from those given in xxvi. 34 and xxviii. 9; and in xxxvi. 31 we read, "These are the kings which reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."

These difficulties are not new suggestions of modern criticism, but are mentioned in some of the oldest commentaries.

As regards Esau's wives, it cannot be denied that there is a difference in their names which it is hard, if not impossible, to explain away. But why should we attempt to do so? There is evidently here some variation. And why should there not be? The mention of a king over Israel—not, let

us observe, over Israel and Judah—render it probable that the whole of this episode, little connected with that which precedes or follows it, may have been inserted either by Samuel or by some editor as late as the age of Samuel; not probably much later, for any editor living after the death of Solomon would have said, "Before there reigned any king over Judah or Israel," not simply over Israel.

We are not questioning the authenticity or genuineness of the book or the Divine guidance of the compiler when we admit that passages may have been added, or ancient records which Moses omitted inserted by later editors and reformers, such as Samuel and the prophets. But if Moses inserted the episode, we must remember that the marriages of Esau happened several centuries before his time, and that they were events having little influence on the fortunes of Israel. Was it likely, then, that Moses, or the prophets who succeeded him, would much concern themselves to clear up any apparent differences in the names of Esau's wives as mentioned in their own family annals and in those of Esau? Thus we may conclude that Moses or some such prophet as Samuel inserted this Edomitish record just as he found it. It would have been perhaps impossible for either of them with the materials before them to clear up the difficulties had they been anxious to do so.

Differences far more formidable and less easy to reconcile are met with by the most diligent of our modern historians, in spite of printed books and their access to state papers, when they are writing about events in our history which occurred two or three hundred years ago. Witness the divers decisions of our lawyers in matters of ecclesiastical controversy.

These differences are fatal to the long exploded theory of mere verbal inspiration, but they in no way affect any more rational system of interpretation or theory of the nature and

extent of the inspired guidance of Moses. And then, as regards verse 31, it is by no means certain that Melek need be here rendered king in the sense in which it is used of Saul or David. It is applied to Moses himself as chief of his people: "He was king in Jeshurun," &c. (Deut. xxxiii. 5); and it is apparently used for a ruler or judge in Judges xvii. 6, as well as of the petty sovereigns of the towns of Canaan in the times of Joshua; and we also find it used of a ruler in Hannah's song of thanksgiving (1 Sam. ii. 10).

Other questions suggest themselves when we read this chapter with care. It seems to consist of two sections. The first ends with verse 8, "Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir: Esau in Edom." And here we may observe that the name Edom, red—though only a sort of nickname given him, not because his hair was red (xxv. 25), but because in his impatient hunger he said to his insidious brother, "Let me devour that red thing, that red thing" (ver. 30)—became afterwards the name of the country he occupied and of the tribes descended from him; the forefathers, we may remark, of the last kings of Israel, Herod the Great and his children.

This first section of the chapter is headed with the usual phrase, "These are the generations of Esau, who is Edom," as we should say in English, "of Esau or Edom." Verses 2–5 give the names of his wives and of the children they bore before he left Canaan. But when did he leave Canaan, and why did he do so? We are told here, verses 6 and 7, that "he went into a land from the face of his brother Jacob," for the same reason which had long before caused the separation of Lot and Abraham, because their flocks and herds were so numerous that they could not conveniently dwell together, especially in a country which was not their own.

This departure from Canaan must therefore have occurred

at a time when Jacob had abundant flocks and herds. But in xxxii. 3 we read that Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother into the land of Seir, the field of Edom; and this he did on his return home from Padan-aram, twenty years after his flight from his brother's anger.

Did Esau, then, go to Seir before Jacob's return from Padan-aram? According to ch. xxxii. 3, he certainly did so, for it was to Seir that Jacob sent to call him. But if so, then what can be the meaning of his leaving Canaan to get out of his brother's way in consequence of the number of his cattle?

We may answer, that though Jacob was at present an exile, he was acknowledged as having the right of the first-born, the inheritance of the double portion of his father's possessions. So that the great increase of these during Jacob's absence may have rendered Esau's removal to a distance desirable; and the expression, "from before his brother Jacob," may simply mean "out of the way of the rapidly-increasing flocks which Jacob would inherit on his return, in addition to those acquired by his own exertions in the service of Laban." And this is rendered the more probable when we observe that only five children were born to Esau before he left Canaan (xxxvi. 4, 5).

Of course it is possible that Esau may have gone to Seir without altogether giving up his home in Canaan and his share of his father's possessions to come to him after his father's death. Thus he may have only partially adopted Seir as his country previous to his father's death, and this parting with Jacob may refer to Esau's final separation from Canaan and Jacob's family after the funeral of Isaac, mentioned in the previous chapter.

But perhaps, after all, when we remember that these verses 6 and 7 occur in an Edomitish record, we may regard them as simply stating the fact of the final and

complete separation of these twin brothers and their descendants, and as assigning, without specifying the time, the chief reason for that separation, the enormous increase of their possessions in a land which did not belong to them.

That a fresh section, and possibly a different Edomitish document, commences with verse 9 is rendered probable by the usual heading, "These are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites, in Mount Seir." It contains a bare list of Esau's descendants, and the Horites, who seem to have occupied the land before him, which was called Seir, from the name of their forefather (ver. 20), and with whom Esau's children seem to have intermarried, and eventually formed one people (Deut. ii. 12). Some of them are called dukes, or, as the word should be rendered, heads of tribes or sheikhs.

This account of the children of Esau and of the great power and increase of the Edomites is interesting to us only as showing that the worldly power and prosperity of Esau was not less than that of his brother, though it pleased God to make the latter, quite irrespective of his merit, and only after a severe punishment for his treachery, the forefather of the chosen nation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB.

CHAPTER xxxvii. commences the history of Joseph, a continuous narrative up to the end of the book, headed, "These are the generations of Jacob," and broken only by the painful episode of chapter xxxviii.

This episode proves the faithfulness of the sacred writer in not concealing the gross sensuality and wickedness of persons so prominent as Judah and his children in the history of the chosen people. As regards the date of the compilation of Genesis, is it conceivable that a story so thoroughly discreditable to the forefather of the royal tribe and the ancestor of the great expected Son of David would have been inserted at any of those later ages suggested by our modern critics?

The episode seems inserted, first, to impress upon the Israelites the wrath of God against all violation of the laws of chastity; and, secondly, to account for the necessity for compulsory legislation with reference to the marriage of a childless brother's widow. The incident suggests the probability of the original existence of the custom which Moses afterwards enforced by a definite law. Concerning the origin, however, of this, as well as of other practices, such as that of sacrifice, which are only incidentally mentioned in this compressed narrative, we are told nothing definite, and should not know that they existed at all but for these occasional records of them.

There are slight chronological difficulties in this chapter, but they disappear if we regard the last clause of xlvi. 12, "And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul," as inserted by Moses, or some later prophet, to continue the genealogy of Judah. Pharez and Hezron must have been born in Egypt; and then there was time for the growing up of Er, Onan, and Shelah to a marriageable age, and for the sin of Judah and the birth of Tamar's twin children. Judah must have been about ten years old when Jacob left Laban; and, as we have seen, there was an interval of thirty-two years between that event and the going down into Egypt. Judah must have been twenty when Joseph was sold, and he probably married before, as it is not at all necessary to understand "at that time" of verse 1 as referring to the exact time of the selling of Joseph. If Judah married at seventeen, there would remain twenty-five years for the other events mentioned in the chapter; the birth, marriage, and death of Er and Onan; the growing up of Shelah; the sin of Judah, and the birth of Pharez and Hezron.

The story of Joseph, which is comprised in chapters xxxvii., xxxix.–l., contains no historical difficulties. It is a continuous and almost unbroken and somewhat less compressed narrative than any given in the earlier portion of Genesis, and brings us down to the final settlement of Israel in Egypt and the death of Joseph, followed by a silence of at least two centuries, and perhaps four.

The story fascinates the child, strengthens the young man in his battle with sin, supports the oppressed and afflicted, and comforts him who is nearing the close of life. It reveals the providence of God over individuals, and shows how His far-seen purposes are accomplished by the free actions of both good and bad men, by human free-will, that great secondary cause in the moral universe by which the counsels of the Most High are brought about in

their due season. There is nothing in the history of Joseph miraculous or even improbable except his dreams and those of Pharaoh; and who shall say that dreams are never providentially suggestive or of influence on the fortunes of men even in this nineteenth century—the age conspicuous for the increase of all knowledge, except, in some sad cases, of the knowledge of God?

Where shall we find in all literature a biography which illustrates better than that of Joseph the nature and power of religious principle, standing as it did those tests which are so fatal to most young men between the age of seventeen and thirty; the entire change of all surroundings, of country, society, and worldly fortunes; passing unscathed from the home in Hebron to the house of Potiphar, and from the dungeon of Egypt to the palace of Pharaoh.

There are some, too, who are ashamed to own their relations, even their parents, when they have been raised to positions of great worldly power, wealth, and dignity. Such may take the measure of their meanness from the example of Joseph.

He has been accused by some of harshness towards his brethren; but the narrative reveals to us the deep yearning of natural affection which lay beneath the surface of his assumed ruggedness of manner, and so enables us to appreciate the great strength of his character and his wisdom in endeavouring to bring his brethren to a sense of their guilt, not only in their conduct towards himself, but also towards his aged father, in persisting for more than twenty years in an infamous falsehood and conspiracy in deceit. Who can read without emotion how he was constrained to "turn himself about from them and weep," when he heard them saying to one another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother" —their sin committed more than twenty years before—"in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us,

and we would not hear;" and when "Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear?"

Some also have objected, or at any rate expressed their wonder, that such an affectionate son should not have taken some earlier opportunity of sending the news of his prosperity in Egypt to his aged father. But we have now reason to believe that this may have been a difficult, if not a dangerous step, for one in Joseph's position, a foreigner promoted above the heads of all the native Egyptians, to have taken. And recent discoveries have shown that the frontiers of Egypt were as jealously guarded as those of our modern countries in which the passport system is in force. None might pass the frontiers without giving a report of themselves, the accuracy of which might be tested. And this explains the anxiety of Joseph's brothers to give a true account of themselves, and also the naturalness of Joseph's affected determination to verify their words.

There are some chronological difficulties connected with the age of Jacob when he entered Egypt and when he died, which can only be accounted for, as in the case of those already mentioned, by supposing that when the numeral letters were changed for words some errors must have occurred.

If Jacob was about forty-five when he deceived his father and went to Charan, he cannot have been more than ninety-seven or a hundred when he went down into Egypt. He was twenty years with Laban. Joseph was born seven years before Jacob left Charan, and was thirty-nine when he received his father and brethren in Egypt at the beginning of the third year of the famine. And Jacob's expression, "few and evil have been the days of the years of my life" (xlvii. 9), are scarcely the words of a man 130 years old.

Such inconsistencies, we may be sure, would not be

found in the work of a composer or compiler of the Book of Genesis in the seventh or sixth century B.C.; nor would they have been allowed to remain by an editor so determined to make everything consistent that he did not scruple to suggest that Elohim must have been inserted after Jehovah in chap. ii. 4, because it did not suit his theory that the passage was the work of the Jehovist.

If these inconsistencies existed in the time of Ezra, and were not corrected by him or by any subsequent copyist, they tend to confirm rather than otherwise the great antiquity of the book and the veneration with which it was regarded. It is most probable, however, that they are due to the cause already suggested, an unintentionally incorrect copying of the letters used for numerals.

Joseph must have been about fifty-six when his father died, and he lived, according to the text, fifty-four years longer. There is a touching simplicity about the closing words of the book, "And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land into the land which he gave to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

When will this be found, and the papyrus read, which must have been wrapt around his body?

CHAPTER XVII.

MORAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE BIBLE.

BESIDES the difficulties which are connected with the Biblical account of the creation of the world and the origin and early history of mankind, there are those which may be called moral difficulties. It is felt by some that there are Divine commands or actions recorded in the Old Testament which are inconsistent with a belief in the perfect righteousness of God, and which cannot therefore be regarded as having been really given or done by Him.

The writer of these pages entirely denies that there is a single passage in the Old Testament which, rightly understood, represents God as doing, commanding, or praising an unrighteous act—any act indeed which is inconsistent with His character and attributes, as they have been revealed to us by the phenomena of the natural world and the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The Bible truthfully records many unrighteous acts, abominable sins, and false or vindictive words of men; but, as a general rule, it neither blames nor praises the good or bad words and deeds which it narrates, the one for the encouragement, the other for the warning of the reader. It gives a faithful picture of some very good, and of many very bad or very mixed characters; and it neither conceals nor palliates the sins and infirmities even of its greatest saints and heroes; and when the sin of some otherwise faithful

man is recorded, its punishment—often a lifelong punishment—is generally recorded also.

To regard a truthful record of the conduct of men, of their false or vindictive words or unrighteous deeds, as reflecting on the moral character of God or of writers inspired by Him, is as absurd as to judge of the character of Shakespeare from the words and actions of Lady Macbeth.

This consideration removes at once a whole class of these supposed moral difficulties, such as the falsehood of Abraham about his wife; the duplicity of Jacob; the sins of David and his curses against his enemies, and such an act as the treachery of Jael.

The latter is a good illustration of this. It is simply monstrous to regard the praise of Deborah as the praise of God. And it is even more absurd to say that Deborah ought to have blamed Jael's act in her song of triumph over the fall of the most formidable enemy of her people. I suppose she ought to have said, "The people will bless Jael for delivering them, but they would have liked her better if she had tied Sisera's hands and feet together instead of killing him." It was a Christian officer, we must remember, who asked Wellington if he might throw a shell into the middle of Napoleon's staff. The decision of Wellington, under some temptation, was more honourable, if less expedient, than that of Jael; and of course the "ruling ideas" of the nineteenth century helped him to decide better what to do on the spur of the moment.

That the end of Sisera was foreseen and permitted by God all will admit who believe in His government of the world. And this suggests another characteristic of Scriptural language.

God is often said to do what He permits and brings about by secondary causes, some of the more important of these causes being the free wills of good and bad men. So God

is said to have sent Joseph into Egypt and made him Prime Minister, although the secondary causes were the partiality of Jacob, the envy and malice of his brothers, and the wickedness of Potiphar's wife. And the blackest conspiracy of wicked men recorded in history brought about that great event which God had foretold from the beginning, and which the Apostles declare His hand and His counsel determined before to be done (Acts iv. 27, 28).

In a similar manner God is said to do that which results from the operation of laws which He has made. In the language of the Bible it is not the rain, nor the heat, nor the chemical affinities of the elements, but God Who causes "the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man." And so in the moral world, it is God Who hardens Pharaoh's heart, although Moses tells us afterwards that Pharaoh hardened his own heart; and it is God Who deceives the elders of Israel and their prophets when they come to consult Him with idols in their hearts (Ezek. xiv. 9), and sends a lying spirit to deceive the prophets of Ahab; the truth being this, that God has made a moral law by which it must come to pass that the man who resists the convictions of his reason and the good impulses of his heart will soon become intellectually blind and morally hardened. And the expression, "For this cause have I raised thee up," does not mean that God had brought Pharaoh into the world and made him a king for this purpose, but, as translated in the Revised Version, "For this cause have I made thee to stand;" that is, allowed thee to survive, and so enabled thee to resist my will.

A great many more moral difficulties disappear when we consider the unique and temporary character of the system established by Moses, and the Divine purposes which it was designed to subserve.

Let us say it with reverence, but the training of a race of

creatures endued with moral freedom was no easy problem even to the Almighty and All-wise—far less easy than the adjustment of all the forces of the material universe.

Left necessarily, therefore, as far as possible to themselves, the nations of the world had become extremely wicked, and if the worship, and even the knowledge, of the One Living God was to be preserved, and the promises of future redemption to be remembered, it was necessary that God should more directly interfere with the exercise of human freedom. And so Abraham was chosen to be the founder of a peculiar people, and afterwards Moses was called to deliver them from Egypt, to form them into a nation, and to give them a code of moral, ceremonial, and civil laws.

The moral law, given in the Ten Commandments, was absolutely perfect, being the law of Nature written in man's heart, and flowing necessarily from man's relation to God and his neighbour. Not so the ceremonial and civil laws. These were intended to keep the Israelites separate from all other nations, to typify the mysteries of the future, to train them like children and slaves, and to keep them in God's service by a system of immediate rewards and punishments and the frequent use of force; to ameliorate many social evils, such as slavery and polygamy, which could not be at once abolished without the complete disorganisation and reconstruction of the whole social system; and especially to prepare men for Christ, and in the fulness of time to introduce Him to the world as their Saviour.

To judge of the moral character of God or the morality of the Old Testament from the civil and judicial laws of Moses is as unfair and unreasonable as to judge of the moral standard of the government and people of Christian England from the laws which we make, not to abolish, but to ameliorate the social evils of our Indian fellow-subjects.

It is not true, therefore, as some have asserted, that the

teaching of the Bible is quite different at the end from what it is at the beginning, and that the morality of the Old Testament is imperfect.

Any one who will study with care the actual words of Moses, and not what men have written about them, will be amazed at the profound wisdom and merciful spirit which pervade all his laws, especially those connected with polygamy, divorce, and slavery, as well as their adaptation to the degraded moral condition of a nation just rescued from long slavery in Egypt.

The penal code is severe, but not more so than was needed, and certainly less severe than that of Christian Europe a few centuries back; and its superior morality to the penal code of any Christian nation is shown from the character of the offences which it severely punishes, such as adultery, seduction, and other like sins. No Christian community, it is to be feared, though supposed to be so advanced in moral ideas, would tolerate the infliction of death upon the adulterer and adulteress, or upon the seducer of a betrothed virgin.

There is, in fact, a confusion of thought here between two very opposite things. What is meant by the morality of the Old Testament? Does it mean the moral teaching of the Old Testament as a revelation and reflection of the moral character of God? Or does it mean that the moral standard and conduct of the Israelites was imperfect?

If the latter, then we may freely admit that the morality of the Israelites was very imperfect. But this was the case only because they failed to reach the standard of holiness set before them by the example of Abraham and Joseph, and the moral law given them by God through Moses.

To judge of the morality of the Old Testament, as a revelation coming from God, from the moral ideas and conduct of the Jews, is as misleading as to judge of the

teaching of Christ and His character from the moral ideas and conduct of the great majority of Christians.

What would a Hindoo think of the morality of the New Testament if he had nothing to guide him but his own observation of the moral ideas and conduct of Christians and the writings of the historians of Christendom?

St. Paul knew the Old Testament well. What is his estimate of the moral standard which it sets before those living under it?

He declares it to be absolutely perfect. "The law is holy, the commandment is holy and righteous and good." The teaching of Christ added nothing to the perfection of the moral standard of the Old Testament in the judgment of St. Paul. It added nothing to the law, but it gave a power which no law could give. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. vii. 12, 15). But in the next chapter he says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (viii. 2).

But it is asserted by some, as a proof that the morality of the Old Testament is imperfect, that it represents the innocent in many cases as justly punished for the wrong-doing of others; that the teaching of Ezekiel indicates progress and an advance towards a higher and more true conception of righteousness, and so rises above the doctrine that the innocent may be punished with the guilty, the children for the sins of their parents; or, worse still, that the individuality of man is ignored, and that a whole race or family is regarded as justly involved in the punishment of one man's sin.

A distinction also is supposed by some modern theologians to be observable in the Old Testament between religion or reverence for God, and the perception of His holiness and man's consequent sense of duty.

The imperfect morality of the Old Testament is supposed to be shown by the importance which it attaches to a recognition of the existence and sovereignty of God rather than of His holiness. As a proof of this it is asserted that the duplicity of Jacob is condoned, while the profaneness of Esau is regarded as a serious offence. But this is utterly untrue. No sin was ever punished more severely than that of Jacob, and Esau was compensated for his loss by far greater worldly prosperity than his treacherous brother.

It would be well if modern Christians, with all their supposed superior conceptions of the holiness of God, could reach the moral standard which Enoch, Noah, and Joseph set before them as carried out in their lives; and if they would study and imitate the noble example of Abraham, who certainly did not consider belief in the existence and sovereignty of God of more importance than the performance of duty at considerable personal sacrifice.

It is high time that these and other similar misconceptions should be removed from the minds of all who wish to believe the authenticity and inspiration of the Old Testament, and they can easily be removed by a careful study of the actual words of Holy Scripture, and a consideration of the character and surroundings of the persons for whom they were written.

Nothing, of course, which can be said will persuade those who welcome difficulties as excuses for unbelief. But every effort should be made to remove these unnecessary stumbling-blocks out of the path of believers.

In considering these supposed difficulties, it is important to remember that it is not in the Bible only that they are found. There are more difficulties in natural religion than in Holy Scripture; and we are very apt to forget how impossible it is for us to know anything about God beyond what He has Himself revealed.

He is the Invisible Cause of all causes, but He has revealed Himself; and it is, therefore, only from His own revelations that we can form any opinion at all of His attributes and moral character.

I. First, we can learn something about Him by examining the laws which He has made for the natural universe.

II. Secondly, from the revelation of Himself, which is described in the Old Testament.

III. And thirdly, from the more perfect manifestation of His character which we have in the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Now if we can show that the Old Testament gives us a conception of the character and attributes of God far higher than any suggested by the phenomena of the natural world, and at the same time consistent with the teaching of Christ recorded in the New Testament, we shall have done all which any objector can reasonably demand.

We can scarcely be called upon to reconcile the moral character of God as revealed in the Old Testament with the false and sentimental conception of Him, as One too kind to punish sinners, which prevails widely in the present day, and which is simply the production in a modern form of the original falsehood of the great Deceiver, "Ye shall not surely die."

Nor can we be called upon to solve the insoluble problem which affects natural quite as much as revealed religion, the existence of physical suffering and moral evil in the universe of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. This is a sore trial to our faith in such a God, but it is a trial which the faith of those who are humble and love God is commonly strong enough to stand, and to create in their hearts a spirit of deep humility and patient waiting.

What we have to show is, that the actions recorded of God or performed by others at His expressed command

in the Old Testament are not inconsistent with His character as revealed in Christ and stamped upon the face of the natural world.

If they are inconsistent with the ideas of what God ought to be or ought to do, which this or that individual may have conceived in his own heart, we cannot help it. We cannot concern ourselves with any questions as to what God ought to be or ought to do. We can only consider the definitions of Him which are given to us in Holy Scripture, the actions and commands there recorded of Him, and His everyday operations in the natural world.

I. First, then, let us see what we can learn of God from His works in Nature. Enough, in St. Paul's opinion, to take away all excuse if men form unworthy conceptions of Him, or wilfully violate the moral law which He has written on their hearts. "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 19–21).

He points out, indeed, that the Gentiles will be judged more leniently than Jews or Christians; but he intimates plainly that the light of Nature ought to be some guide to them. "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; . . . for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their

thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. ii. 12, 14).

If we believe in God at all as the Maker of all things, the slightest examination of the natural world and of the course of Nature will impress us with a conviction that He must be a Being of irresistible power and inconceivable wisdom; and the more the mysterious secrets of Nature are unfolded by advancing knowledge, the deeper this conviction becomes.

But there is perhaps no truth so stamped upon the face of Nature as this, that God is a Ruler, and that He has given to all things laws which can never be broken with impunity.

It is equally clear that He has given many of His creatures, especially man, power to break them, or to attempt to break them, or, which is much the same, to neglect to observe them, if they choose; but He always punishes them, often very terribly, for so doing; and, what is more to our present purpose, often involves in that punishment the innocent as well as the guilty.

He is obviously an impartial Ruler. It matters not by whom His law is broken, whether by the thoughtless, the careless, or the wilful, the punishment inevitably follows. As He causes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain upon the just and upon the unjust, so the flood, the earthquake, and the fire consume alike the innocent and the guilty. The folly of the miner who opens his safety-lamp to light his pipe involves hundreds of innocent persons in the destruction caused by the sin of one, and the God of Nature interferes not to rescue them.

And what does the light of Nature teach us when we look into our own hearts and consider the course of human affairs?

Here, too, we discern a law which cannot be broken

with impunity: we find a law distinguishing clearly between right and wrong—a law as obviously impressed upon all moral agents as gravitation is given to guide the movements of the heavenly bodies. The breaking of this law also involves many who are innocent in the suffering which follows as the natural and necessary consequence of the sin of one. The vices of the sensual or intemperate father are visited on his children and his children's children. The follies of a weak or wicked ruler involve a whole nation in disaster and suffering.

Thus the view of God which mere Nature gives us is very terrible. We might fear, nay, we must fear, such a Being, but could scarcely love Him.

The more thoughtful among the heathen could catch here and there some gleams of light in this dark picture. They saw something of the excellence and natural rewards of morality, of self-restraint, of temperance, of kindness to their fellow-creatures; they had some vague and phantom-like conception of a future of rewards and punishments distributed with greater justice than on earth; and yet, some even of the most thoughtful of them were disposed to attribute the sudden misfortunes of the happy and prosperous, however innocent, to a spirit of envy in the Supreme Ruler of the world.

None were to be accounted happy in the estimation of Solon until the end of life, because "the God is envious," and delights to overthrow the excessively prosperous—a sad travesty of the teaching of the 73rd Psalm, and still more of the words of Jesus: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (St. Luke xviii. 14).

II. And now, what does the Old Testament teach us about God? It confirms the teaching of Nature that He is a Ruler Who will not be trifled with; that no law which

He has made, even the smallest, may be broken with impunity. The light of Nature taught the thoughtful heathen that the mills of the gods move slowly indeed, but grind to powder. The Psalmist of the Old Testament confirms their judgment: "God is a righteous Judge, strong, and patient; and God is provoked every day. If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword: He hath bent His bow, and made it ready: He hath prepared for him the instruments of death" (Ps. vii. 11–13).

Yes; the Psalmist confirms the judgment of the heathen, but with an addition which makes all the difference. "If a man will not turn," he says, implying that he may turn and escape because a door of repentance is open. And thus God is described by Moses as a punishing, indeed, but pitying and pardoning God. "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7).

And now, what is the meaning of this visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon children? Does it teach that it is just to punish the innocent children for the sins of the parents? Certainly not.

In the first place, it is restricted in the second commandment to the case of those who hate God, who continue therefore in the sins of their parents; and secondly, if the children are innocent and yet suffer, their suffering must be regarded not as the punishment, but as the natural consequence of their parents' sin. Neither is it commonly observed that this mention of the third and fourth generation is a limitation of the natural law of heredity, so much insisted upon

in these days. Nature knows nothing of repentance or of limitation of the punishment of broken law. It is the God of the Old Testament Who makes a way to escape natural consequences by repentance, and shows mercy upon thousands in them that love Him and keep His commandments.

That the Old Testament does not teach that children may be justly punished for the sins of their parents is clear from the fact that such injustice, consistent perhaps with the "ruling ideas" of the surrounding heathen nations, is expressly forbidden by Moses. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. xxiv. 16). And in reference to this law we read of King Amaziah, "It came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king, his father, but the children of the murderers he put not to death: according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, as the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin" (2 Kings xiv. 5, 6).

It is, therefore, as already observed, a mistake, though made by many of our modern theologians, to represent Ezekiel as "rising above this doctrine." There is no such doctrine in the Old Testament for him to rise above. What he does rise above is the hypocrisy of his wicked contemporaries, who, by the use of a profane proverb, wished to shift the burden of their own responsibility upon the shoulders of their parents. "What mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? . . . Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine; the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. xviii.).

It is true indeed that, just as the earthquake often destroys the innocent and the guilty alike, so some of God's judgments sent expressly for the punishment of sinners involved many innocent persons in the same ruin. But here the Bible teaches us to distinguish clearly between suffering inflicted as a temporal punishment for sin, and that which falls upon the innocent by way of natural consequence.

Holy Scripture does not represent temporal suffering as punishment at all, except when sent expressly for that purpose; and the Book of Job was written chiefly to correct the false estimate of temporal misfortunes which men are always tempted to form.

Such an idea is indeed natural if we lose sight of a future of compensation. The Jews in our Saviour's time held this opinion, and He contradicted it, saying of some who were killed by Pilate while in the act of offering sacrifice: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (St. Luke xiii. 2).

To judge of the justice of God without taking into consideration a revealed eternal future of compensation, is as foolish as to form an opinion of the beauty or usefulness of the tree or flower from its bitter or unsightly roots, or to estimate the work of a great artist when as yet he has only drawn the outline with his pencil, or painted in a few of the lesser lights and shadows upon his canvass.

But it will be argued that very little is said about a future of compensation in the Old Testament.

True, very little is said about it, but it is taken for granted all through, and it is omitted by Moses only because any special mention of it in his laws would be entirely out of place.

The Old Testament, with the exception of Genesis and the Book of Job, is entirely concerned with the temporal theocracy of Israel; and, although it contains prophecies and intimations of a more spiritual and unearthly kingdom yet to come, its actual laws all refer to the present temporal government of the chosen people, and its rewards and punishments are therefore all confined to this life.

The mention of rewards and punishments after this life would be as much out of place in the legislation of Moses as it would be in the statutes of a modern Christian nation.

What would some heathen, ignorant of all the ideas of Christians about another life, infer from studying the law-books of Christendom? Would he find in our laws and penal statutes any allusion to the rewards and punishments of disembodied spirits, or of the risen bodies of the just and unjust? The saints of the Old Testament proved by their conduct that they looked for future compensation. They are spoken of as "looking for a city which hath foundations," &c. "Confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," &c. "Seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. xi. 10–16). It is the Old Testament, we must remember, that records the translation of Enoch and Elijah to a better world.

But to return to this question of the supposed punishment of the innocent with the guilty, do we find examples of it in the Old Testament?

That such indiscriminate punishments were just may have been a ruling idea of surrounding heathen nations, but it is plainly contrary to the teaching of the Old Testament. It was certainly not a ruling idea in the mind of Abraham. Pleading to God for Sodom, he says, "That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that

be far from Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25).

We have many examples of the innocent suffering the natural consequences of the sins of others, as in the natural world. There must have been thousands of comparatively innocent persons and perfectly innocent children destroyed by the Flood, the fires of Sodom, and the sword of Joshua. But these suffered not the punishment, but the natural consequences of the sins of the really guilty; and it may be at once admitted that, if there were no hereafter, such indiscriminate suffering could not easily be reconciled with our ideas of justice in Him Who inflicts it.

Nature gives no answer to the objector. The Bible alone gives a full and complete answer. "Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." "Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed which endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity and merciful" (St. James v. 10, 11).

The whole aspect of suffering innocence is changed when we turn from Nature to Revelation, and still further when we learn from the lips of Him Who, sinless Himself, endured the natural consequences of all sin, the sacredness and usefulness of suffering and the glory which is to follow.

But still it may be said that there are examples of the punishment of the innocent with the guilty in the Old Testament which cannot be accounted for by saying that they were not punished, but only had to bear the natural consequences of the broken law. Admitting that the thousands of innocent women and children who were drowned in the Flood, burnt in the fires of Sodom, or slain in the commanded wars of extermination in Canaan;

admitting for the sake of argument that these suffered not the punishment, but the natural consequences of the sins of others, and so were consoled and compensated, like all innocent sufferers, in another life, the objector may still urge that there are examples in the Old Testament of children punished for their fathers' sins.

There is, indeed, one instance which looks like this, but only one: the case of Achan. He was destroyed "with his sons and daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had," for stealing and hiding some of the spoils of Jericho.

It is, of course, possible that his sons and his daughters may have been aware of their father's crime, and willing to profit by it, in which case their punishment with him may have been just, however terribly severe. Neither is it clear from the text that Achan's children were killed by God's command. The indignation of Joshua and the rage of the people may have caused them to go beyond the Divine command. The "all that he hath" in the Divine command of verse 15 may have been intended to include only his possessions, and the expression "all Israel stoned him with stones" looks like the onslaught of an infuriated mob.

We have plenty of examples in modern times of mobs supposed to be more civilised than the Israelites inflicting punishments beyond those prescribed by law. The supposed offence of one has been visited on innocent women and children, and their houses and cattle have been destroyed while Christian priests have been looking on. Shall we expect a people just rescued from slavery, and infuriated by recent defeat, to vent their rage upon the cause of their trouble more leniently than a Christian mob?

But supposing the "all that he hath" was intended to include Achan's children, the case must be regarded as quite exceptional and didactic, intended to produce an

indelible impression upon the minds of the Israelites, just entering upon a long course of terrible wars, in which it was of the last importance that the very strictest obedience should be rendered to their captain.

Joshua had to lead to victory a turbulent and most self-willed people, and had therefore to form them into a highly disciplined army. In all such cases exceptional severity at the beginning is generally found to be the most merciful course in the end.

In the Franco-German war we read of death being at once inflicted for the breach of a Christian general's orders; and that not only in the case of French civilians who attempted to defend their houses, but even upon German soldiers for acts of theft or violence.

But the whole warfare of Israel against the nations of Canaan is unique in the history of the world, and was conducted upon exceptional principles, which were never intended for the guidance of future generations.

It was important that the hands of Joshua should be strengthened by exceptional severity at the commencement of such a war. If the children of Achan were innocent, they suffered only the natural consequences of their father's sins, and were thus taken away from much evil to come, like those of Dathan and Abiram.

These latter perished in the earthquake with their sinning fathers, because they, of course, remained in the tents of their parents, when the rest of the people removed to a safe distance at the command of Moses (Numb. xvi. 27); and as regards the children of Korah, we are distinctly told that "they died not" (Numb. xxvi. 11).

But the best proof of the exceptional character of the punishment of Achan is the fact that, in all other instances, it is commanded that the actual sinner alone shall be punished.

A man was guilty of blaspheming the name of God. It was apparently the first offence of the kind which had been openly committed since the promulgation of the Law, and so "they put him in ward, that it might be declared unto them at the mouth of the Lord." The sentence pronounced may therefore be regarded as a distinct revelation of the will of God concerning the judicial punishment of a sinner. The blasphemer alone is to be stoned to death (Levit. xxiv. 10).

The flagrant sin of Zimri with the Midianitish woman is punished by the death only of the actual sinners (Numb. xxv. 14).

The wilful murderer, the smiter or curser of his father or mother, the man-stealer, the adulterer and adulteress, the Sabbath-breaker, the worshipper of Moloch, and others convicted of capital crimes are commanded to be put to death, but not one word is said about their children. Indeed, the law of Moses, already quoted as acted upon by King Amaziah, must be regarded as finally settling this question: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for their fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. xxiv. 16).

But there is perhaps scarcely anything in the Bible so contrary to our modern ideas of morality or justice as the command given to the Israelites to kill every man, woman, and child of the nations of Canaan. And we may at once admit that such a command, under other circumstances, would be so monstrous that we should find it very difficult to believe it could possibly come from God.

But it must be observed that this wholesale slaughter was forbidden under all other circumstances. "When thou drawest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer

of peace, and open unto thee, that all the people that is found therein shall become tributary unto thee, and shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God delivereth it into thy hand, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword; but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take for a prey unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these peoples, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy them; the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods" (Deut. xx. 10–18).

Here we see the reason for this otherwise monstrous command. It was given with a very special purpose; and its execution by their own hands, though often, as we might naturally suppose, sorely against their own will, was a judgment intended to burn into the heart of Israel, and through them into the heart of all nations, a truth which the waters of the Flood and the fires of Sodom had proved insufficient to teach, namely, God's abhorrence of the loathsome and unnatural cruelty and crimes, which were not only openly practised by the sensual descendants of Ham, but also formed an essential part of their religion; "their abominations which they did unto their gods."

These horrible crimes and the practice of throwing hundreds of little children into the fiery image of Moloch,

constituted part of the national religion of these people, and indeed of most of the nations descended from Ham.

Nothing was more calculated to impress the Israelite with a horror of these crimes than the command to destroy with their own hands these abominable sinners and all connected with them. And it had this effect. The Israelites stand almost alone among the nations of the old world conspicuous, except when they fell away from God, for abstinence from unnatural crimes and the practice of infanticide.

It was impressed upon them again and again that the land of the Canaanites was not given them for their own righteousness, but because God had determined to destroy these sinful nations. Many centuries had been allowed them for timely repentance; and the descendants of Abraham were therefore not to enter it until their iniquity was full (Gen. xv. 16). "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee" (Deut. ix. 5).

It was one of the sins of Israel that they did not execute this terrible command as thoroughly as they ought. The result was that they learnt from time to time to imitate these sinners, for doing which they were often punished, and eventually carried away to Babylon. Thus the Psalmist complains, "Neither destroyed they the heathen, as the Lord commanded them; but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. Insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay: yea, they offered their sons and their daughters unto devils; and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was defiled with blood" (Ps. cvi. 34–37).

They forgot, indeed, from time to time the warning words

of God spoken by Moses: "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things; for in all these" (a terrible list of unnatural crimes just mentioned) "the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you, and the land is defiled: therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye therefore shall keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations, . . . that the land vomit not you out also when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you" (Lev. xviii. 24–28).

It is clear, therefore, that the Old Testament gives us a revelation of the moral character of God entirely consistent with what we may learn concerning Him from His government of the natural world. It represents Him as the Author, not only of a physical, but also still more of a moral law, which can never be broken with impunity, and under the operation of which the sinner often involves many innocent persons in the natural consequences of his sin. But it further reveals the consoling truth that God is merciful, gracious, and long-suffering, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; leaving no door of escape for the obstinate sinner, but graciously pardoning all who repent and amend.

This is distinctly stated at the very beginning by Moses, and confirmed by the prophets (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Ezek. xviii. 27–32).

It is also very important to remember, as affecting the moral character of God, that He is a Ruler; because it is obvious that that which is unrighteous in a subject may often be righteous in Him Who rules. Even the earthly ruler "beareth not the sword in vain;" with much more justice therefore are life and death in the hands of Him Who rules all the lives which He has given. The sword is not allowed to the subject, and the death, which may lawfully be inflicted by the ruler, is murder when caused by

the hand of a fellow-subject. Private vengeance is strictly forbidden; but punishment proportioned to the offence is righteous, as expressed by the maxim, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Both Moses and Christ forbid the individual to act on this principle, because it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19; Gen. iv. 15; Deut. xxxii. 35).

It is a mistake, therefore, to regard the psalmists and later prophets as rising above any previous teaching of the Old Testament. It would be just as true to speak of the Reformers in the sixteenth century as rising above the Christian teaching of earlier times.

The psalmists and the prophets had a keener insight than others into the teaching of Moses and the will of God, as revealed from the beginning in the Holy Scriptures. Their contemporaries had lost sight of the spirituality of the laws of Moses, though scarcely so much as mediæval if not modern Christians have often lost sight of the spiritual teaching of Christ and His Apostles.

Just as Cain thought to propitiate God by an offering when his heart was not in it and his life was unholy, so the Jews in the time of the prophets, the Pharisees in the time of Christ, and the modern Pharisees of Christendom at all times have forgotten the great truth which the heart of man should teach him alike in every age—a truth which is expressed in the words, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22).

And now in the following chapter let us see what we may learn of the moral character of God from the teaching of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We have in the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ the fullest possible revelation of God. Is this revelation consistent with what we learn of Him from the natural world and from the Old Testament?

Nature and the Old Testament reveal God as a Ruler Who will never allow His laws to be altered or broken. Moses writes thus: "O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them. . . . Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. iv. 1, 2).

Does our Saviour represent it as at all safer to break these laws? or does He in His own teaching add to them or diminish from them?

As regards the end of sinners or law-breakers, it must be admitted that the teaching of the New Testament is far more terrible than anything which we find in the rest of the Bible.

St. Paul tells us that the Gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" but also that in it "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. i. 16, 18). Christ is a revelation of the extreme of mercy

and the extreme of wrath. He came into the world to save all who will consent to be saved. But more withering curses against the impenitent, the irreverent, and the hypocritical never issued from the mouth of any Old Testament prophet. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (St. Matt. xxiii. 33). "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (St. Matt. xxii. 13). "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (St. Matt. xxv. 41). "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (St. Matt. vii. 23).

If it is inconsistent with the moral character of God to punish sinners, then we can only say that the revelation which He has given of Himself in Nature and in the Bible is a misleading revelation. His determination not to leave the law-breaker unpunished is stamped upon the face of Nature and upon the pages of common history. The Bible, especially the New Testament, confirms this, though it shows the sinner a widely opened door of escape by repentance, amendment, and faith in a Redeemer.

There is indeed this marked difference between the system of Moses and that of Christ. Moses instituted a temporary theocracy, a kingdom of God upon the earth, confined to a single nation, appointing immediate rewards and punishments in this life as the sanctions even of the moral law. But Christ founded an eternal theocracy, a spiritual and universal kingdom of God, in this world indeed but not of it.

All His rewards, therefore, as well as His punishments, are deferred until the great Day of Judgment; and He no longer offers a life of ease and prosperity even to His true disciples, but calls upon them to bear His cross here in the great battle between good and evil, that they may hereafter share His glory.

He came as the greatest of reformers, to call men back to the simple and childlike religion of Eden. "It was not so from the beginning." The religion of Abel, Enoch, and Noah was pure and spiritual. They were strict monogamists. It was a son of wicked Cain who introduced polygamy. It was practised in the time of Moses. His laws were framed not to abolish, but to regulate it, and this practice as well as divorce was allowed for the hardness of men's hearts.

This principle pervades all our Saviour's teaching: "It was not so from the beginning." He came to re-establish the original and universal religion of the world—the religion of Adam, Enos, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, and Abraham; the religion of faith and self-sacrificing duty; the religion of "faith which worketh by love"—and to add to this, not any new moral truth, but higher, holier, and more constraining motives, a fuller sense of forgiveness, through faith in His sacrifice, and a living power in the heart to love and obey our Heavenly Father's will, resulting from a spiritual and heart union with His own Divine Person through the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The sayings of them of old, therefore, which Christ appears either to condemn or to develop, are not the sayings of God's law, but the perversions of it by human tradition. The Jews ought to have known, and the spiritually minded among them did know, that the sixth and seventh commandments forbade hatred and lust, and that the maxim, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was not meant to justify private vengeance, but as a rule of justice for the magistrate.

It is sadly forgotten by our modern theologians, who are carried away by the mania of accounting for everything by evolution, that the Christian is directed to look back beyond the Mosaic dispensation, and to make the religion of Abraham his model.

The moral law has not been evolved, but revealed; and that the moral sense is innate in man, as a being endowed with reason, is evident from the fact that it is never so keen as in the case of an uncorrupted child.

The origin of species, and even of man, may or may not be the result of some process of evolution, of natura selection and the survival of the fittest.

Science also, which is only another name for an acquaintance with the phenomena, forces, and laws of the material universe, has grown by a sort of evolutionary process, being the result of observation, experiment, and thought; necessitating, therefore, many mistakes and the demolition by new discoveries of many once accepted theories.

But religion is not the result of any such process. It deals with phenomena with which natural history and physical science have nothing whatever to do.

As Lord Macaulay pointed out long ago, neither natural nor revealed religion is of the nature of a progressive science. "There are branches of knowledge," he writes, "with respect to which the law of the human mind is progress. In mathematics, when once a proposition has been demonstrated, it is never afterwards contested. Every fresh story is as solid a basis for a new superstructure as the original foundation was. Here, therefore, there is a constant addition to the stock of truth. In the inductive sciences, again, the law is progress. Every day furnishes new facts, and thus brings theory nearer and nearer to perfection. . . . But with theology the case is different. As respects natural religion—revelation being for the present altogether left out of the question—it is not easy to see that a philosopher of the present day is more favourably situated than Thales or Simonides. He has before him just the same evidence of design in the structure of the universe which the early Greeks had. We say just the

same; for the discoveries of modern astronomers and anatomists have really added nothing to the force of that argument which a reflecting mind finds in every beast, bird, insect, fish, leaf, flower, and shell. . . . Then, again, all the great enigmas which perplex the natural theologian are the same in all ages. The ingenuity of a people just emerging from barbarism is quite sufficient to propound them. The genius of Locke and Clarke is quite unable to solve them. . . . Natural theology, then, is not a progressive science. . . . But neither is revealed religion of the nature of a progressive science. All Divine truth is, according to the doctrines of the Protestant Churches, recorded in certain books. It is equally open to all who, in any age, can read those books; nor can all the discoveries of all the philosophers in the world add a single verse to any of these books. It is plain, therefore, that in divinity there cannot be a progress analogous to that which is constantly taking place in pharmacy, geology, and navigation" ("Essay on Von Ranke," p. 349).

And yet there is progress in religion, though of a totally different kind from that which we understand by evolution in the natural world, or the growth of the physical sciences.

Revelation has had a growth, and man's perception of revealed truth has grown from time to time, then decayed and revived again; but the vital principle of that growth has not been observation, experiment, or thought, but the enlightening Spirit of God.

False religions may have been thought out by man or invented by the vain imaginations of his heart. They all contain some elements of truth. It would be strange indeed if they did not.

But the true religion—(and there can be only one; all might be false; but if one is true, it logically follows that all which differ from it, or wherein they differ from it, must be

false)—the one true religion, the knowledge of the One Living God and the way to serve Him, has not been thought out or evolved, but revealed from the very beginning. And in whatever way that revelation was made, the only record of it which exists is contained in the Holy Scriptures.

And in Holy Scripture it is easy to trace a growth and process of training such as we should naturally expect to observe.

The problem before the Great Creator, when He made man in His own image, was that of training him for the safe enjoyment of moral freedom, and of bringing him up to the high level of sonship eventually revealed and effected by Christ; a condition in which he can be justly required to walk entirely by faith, and not by sight, and has no right to demand supernatural evidences of the existence of God or of the requirements of His moral law.

The Bible records this process of training with great clearness and simplicity. And if we are to judge of the moral character of God from what we read in the Bible, we must take its narratives as they stand, and not explain away those miraculous elements which are so inseparably interwoven with them.

According to these narratives, the earliest revelations were made not by internal spiritual communications, as in the case of the later prophets, but by visible appearances of One called the Angel of the Lord. Nothing can be plainer than the statements of Holy Scripture that God revealed Himself visibly by the Angel of the Lord to the ancient saints, and that such visible manifestations became more and more rare as man became more and more trained to walk by faith and not by sight.

And when we trace this gradual withdrawal of miraculous manifestations and revelations to the end, we find them

ceasing altogether when the Christian Church was thoroughly founded and organised in the world. "God, Who with many different degrees of clearness and in many different ways spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," at last spoke to us by His Son. In Him He gave us the fullest possible revelation of Himself. Miraculous powers were necessary to confirm the authority of the founders of the Christian Church; but we do not find that any except the Apostles could communicate these powers to others. Authority to rule the Church they could transmit, but not miraculous powers. Whence it followed that miracles entirely ceased as those died out to whom the last of the Apostles had communicated the power to work them.

Visions of angels indeed and miracles would have been anachronisms after the establishment of Christianity, the very essence of which, as distinguished from Judaism, consists in walking by faith and not by sight. Since that time, therefore, the moral power imparted by the Holy Spirit and the fulfilment of prophecy, and not visible miracles, have been to the Christian the principal supernatural evidences of the truth.

If any knowledge of God was to be given or to be kept alive in early ages, visible manifestations were absolutely necessary. And without them the conduct of Abraham, for example, in leaving his country, pleading for Sodom, and proceeding to sacrifice his son Isaac, the child of promise, is inconceivable and unintelligible.

Nothing but the most absolute certainty that God had commanded it, and that He had some hidden and mysterious purpose in giving the inhuman command, could have induced such a man as Abraham to consent to slay the very son by whom the promises of God were to be fulfilled. And as regards the righteousness of the command, we may at once admit that we cannot conceive that a righteous

God would have given it for the mere probation of His faithful servant, were it not intended to reveal to him, as the father of the faithful, the tenderness of the Eternal Father's compassion, Who so loved the world that He was about to give His only-begotten Son to redeem it. And we know from our Lord's own words that a revelation of the Gospel was made to him, and probably by the teaching of this strange transaction. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad" (St. John viii. 56). "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 17).

We have no knowledge whatever of this transaction except what we gain from the sacred narrative; and in judging of its character, whether with reference to God or Abraham, we must not treat as historical that part of the narrative which suits our purpose, and reject as unhistorical—a modern euphemism for "untrue"—just that part which makes it intelligible. And unless we believe what we read, that Abraham had often visible and not only spiritual communion with God by the Angel of the Lord, the transaction is simply monstrous and inconceivable. No mere miracle or wonder which he might have conceived to have been permitted for his trial could have persuaded him or justified his conduct. The same Angel of the Lord commanded the sacrifice, who also "called unto him out of heaven, and said, . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me" (Gen. xxii. 1–2, 11–12).

But as time went on, it pleased God to reveal Himself in

another way, by the establishment of a temporal theocracy, confined to one nation, upon a system of temporal rewards and punishments, and the employment of force for the suppression of error.

Without abolishing the universal religion of the world established from the beginning, though soon and sadly corrupted, kept pure only by visible manifestations of Himself in such cases as those of Abraham and Melchizedek, and without ceasing to be still the object of Divine worship to Israel, God constituted Himself a temporal King and Ruler of His chosen people.

That the Mosaic dispensation was not intended to displace the more spiritual religion of Abraham, the religion of "faith which worketh by love," but only to keep alive a knowledge of the true God until Christ came, and to prepare for and bear witness to Him when He came, is evident from the principle which pervades our Lord's teaching, already alluded to, "It was not so from the beginning;" and also from the inspired reasoning of St. Paul.

He teaches us plainly that Christianity is not a system evolved from Judaism, but, on the contrary, a return to the more simple religion of Abraham, the religion of "faith which worketh by love."

He strongly contrasts it with Judaism, a system introduced, as he explains, because of transgressions; a sort of parenthesis in the dealings of God with the great human family; a system established long after the promise, given immediately after the Fall, had been renewed to Abraham.

The law of Moses he represents as a stern system of government, with immediate rewards and punishments, rendered necessary by the growing wickedness and wilfulness of man and his rapid falling away from God; a

system treating man as a slave and not as a son, dealing with him as we deal with our children when they grow up beyond the simple age of boyhood and reach the wilful period of youth, when they require to be controlled in many ways, and trained by discipline for the safe enjoyment of manhood's freedom.

All this is very clearly drawn out in Galatians iii. He begins by referring the Christian for his religion beyond Moses and back to the religion of Abraham. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. . . . The covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul. . . . Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made. . . . Before faith came, we were kept under the law. . . . The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. . . . The heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be master of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage. . . . But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts."

But the evolutionary mania of the present day is beginning to show itself in a much more dangerous form in the writings of some modern theologians. The teaching of Christ and His Apostles is regarded as a sort of germ from which a purer form of Christianity is to be evolved by modern thought and civilisation.

For heaven's sake let us strive after a purer, higher,

holier Christianity than any which has prevailed in Christendom since the second or third century; but let us not dare to add to or take away from the teaching of Christ and His inspired Apostles.

If our Christianity is to be better, we must make it more like the religion of Abraham and that of the early Christians, a religion of "faith which worketh by love." We must drink of the waters at the fountain-head, not of the stream polluted by human sin and strife.

It may suit modern ideas better to represent God as too merciful to punish sinners. "Ye shall not surely die" has always been a popular saying. And the terrible end of the finally impenitent, of which our Saviour speaks, may well shock the moral sense, as it is called, of the nineteenth century, and tempt theologians to explain away His words, lest men should reject their teaching.

But to repeat the words of Lord Macaulay, neither natural nor revealed religion is of the nature of a progressive science. And whatever may be the difficulties of belief, we may not dare to lessen them, for an age intoxicated by the excess of physical knowledge, by misrepresenting the plain teaching of Nature and the Bible.

We know, indeed, to our unspeakable comfort, from the Old Testament, that which Nature could not teach us, that "Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him. That He knoweth whereof we are made: He remembereth that we are but dust" (Ps. ciii. 8–14).

And in the New Testament we have the fullest revelation of the tender mercy as well as of the justice of God.

The two sides of His character are brought out in strongest contrast in the person and teaching of Christ. Infinite Mercy could not suggest, Infinite Wisdom could not devise, Infinite Power could not execute an act of

Divine Love more constraining than the sacrifice of the Son of Man, the incarnation of the Eternal Son of God. He, the only Sinless Man, bears in His own Body the natural consequences of the sins of the whole world, that all who believe in Him, and love Him, and obey Him, may not perish, but have everlasting life.

He who rules the moral universe cannot weaken the sanctions of the moral law. Rather than this, He bears in the Person of Christ "the iniquity of us all."

But the revelation of this inconceivable mystery of Divine Love magnifies to the highest degree the heinousness of unbelief and sin, and vindicates the justice of Him "who will render to every man according to his deeds," and, as St. Paul explains afterwards, according to his light and opportunities: "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." For God is a righteous God, and therefore, "There is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. ii. 6–11).

CHAPTER XIX.

CREATION OR EVOLUTION.

THE discoveries not only of geology, but also of natural history and comparative anatomy, have thrown much light upon the probable origin of the world and of man, and therefore upon those early chapters of the Bible which treat of them.

It may be well, therefore, to consider how far the modern doctrine that even man is the result of a process commonly called Evolution is consistent with the popular language in which his origin is described in Holy Scripture.

Creation and Evolution are popularly understood in two widely different senses. Creation is taken to signify the sudden production of things by the immediate energy of the Divine will; Evolution their slow and gradual formation by the working, during immense periods of time, of causes still observed to be in operation. But it is most important to remember that neither theory excludes the idea of a Personal Creator.

It is quite as likely, *a priori*, that God should have brought things to their present state by a gradual process, advancing at every stage nearer and nearer to the predetermined result, as that He should have willed them into being in an instant, or in the course of a few hours or days.

There was a time when men used the Bible as a guide

to science, instead of science as a guide to the meaning of the Bible. The time has now come when we adopt the opposite and more reasonable course. For science means knowledge, and real knowledge must throw light upon any written composition, whether human or divine.

The persecutors of Galileo were not only cruel but unreasonable when they appealed to the Bible to prove that the astronomer was contradicting a revealed truth, when he said that the earth went round the sun in a year, and revolved once on its own axis in twenty-four hours. Shall we not be equally unreasonable if we attempt to refute the legitimate conclusions of the Evolutionist by the inspired but popular language of Holy Scripture?

The question, therefore, is not a religious but a scientific question. The question is not whether God created all living things, or whether they were evolved, without a God, by some spontaneous but inconceivable process, out of some original and even more inconceivable germ of being; but whether, when God created them, they came into existence fully developed and pretty much as we find them now, or whether He made at first one or a few forms of life, their present almost endless variety being the result of natural selection and other slowly operating causes?

We may accept as probably true, if not certainly proved, the conclusions of moderate Evolutionists; but on purely scientific grounds their theory, taken alone and without the constant control, if not occasional intervention, of the energising will of the Creator, seems quite insufficient to account for the immense variety and marked and permanent differences which we see in the existing forms of vegetable and animal life.

The survival of the fittest in the struggle for life; food, climate, and surroundings; the use or disuse of members;

sexual selection and domestication, have doubtless been from the very beginning powerfully modifying forces.

But why cannot the mule breed? Where are the innumerable missing links, especially between man and the highest form of animal?

The breeder, by careful selection of parents, can produce almost any form of sheep, cow, horse, or pigeon. But is it conceivable that even in a million years, and with all his opportunities of selection, he could change the sheep into the dog, the cow into the horse, or the pigeon into the crow or hawk?

Is it not evident, therefore, that the Creator has set up certain barriers, within which there may be evolved many varieties of form, but which can never be passed over?

Again, great stress is laid upon the fact that the embryos of very different animals are at first, and for a considerable time, indistinguishable.

But what does this prove? Does it prove that there is no difference between the embryo of a dog and that of a man? By no means. All which the likeness of the two proves is this, that the eye of man, aided by the most powerful microscope, cannot see the difference. That they are amazingly different is proved by the invariable result, and the conclusion drawn from this universally observed result will remain unanswered until a dog gives birth to a human being, and, we may add, until an elm tree springs from an acorn, until grapes are gathered from thorns, and figs from thistles.

But even if we admit, for the sake of argument, all which the Evolutionist demands, is there anything in his theory incompatible with the popular language of Genesis? Certainly not, if we once give up the literal interpretation of the natural days. On the contrary, the expressions used would rather support it.

The most extreme theory of Evolution, as already observed, in no way tends necessarily to the denial of a Personal Creator; neither does it depreciate His irresistible power or inscrutable wisdom: rather the contrary. The Divine *fiat* seems even more inconceivably grand when we think of it as embracing all time, and involving in the mere germ of being the fulness and the infinite variety of the material universe.

The question is not, Did a Personal God create? but rather, How did He create? Was it by instantaneous acts of creative energy, or by the slow process of Evolution? Does He commonly work immediately, that is to say, without the employment of means, or mediately and by a long chain of secondary causes?

Admitting, then, for the sake of argument, that His *modus operandi* has been uniformly what we call Evolution, what does the writer of Genesis say about it?

He rather confirms than denies it. God creates the material universe. But having done so, He is not then said to create living things. On the contrary, He commands the earth, the water, and the air to produce them. The words are, "Let the earth bring forth grass. . . . Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature," &c. And He is then said to have created them, the *modus operandi* having been first thus indicated. And even of the higher animals it is said, "Let the earth bring them forth."

The origin of man, indeed, seems to be attributed to a more immediate act of the Creator; and, if it is true that even man owes his bodily origin to evolution, most scientific men admit that something very unusual must have taken place when he first appeared. Something must have interfered with the process by which life is usually derived from life. There must have been something akin to an incarna-

tion of intellect, the material embodiment of a moral being, the image of God.

We may safely, then, leave these questions of Evolution, the continuity of Nature, and the origin of man's body in the hands of scientific experts, and declare that, as theologians, we no longer feel called upon to determine them either way, or to reconcile them with the language of Holy Scripture.

But it is very important to have a clear idea of the origin of man, as a being created in the image of God; and to ascertain his origin we must very carefully consider what he is.

He is evidently a very complex being. He has a material body enlivened by an animal soul, and he differs in body from the brute creation only in his higher and more delicate organisation and erect stature. He is surpassed by many animals in size and strength, as well as in many natural faculties and instincts.

As such, he is a creature who could scarcely have held his own in the struggle for life against the lion or tiger, or even against the more agile and ferocious orang or gorilla, supposed by some to have been his ancestor, connected with him by a long line of ape-like men or man-like apes, whom he is supposed to have improved off the face of the earth, and who have left no traces whatever of their existence.

But man is a great deal more than a highly organised animal of erect stature.

He is possessed of an intellect, which has given him, from the very earliest times in which there are any traces of his existence, dominion over all other creatures on earth, however superior they may be to him in other respects. The huge size and sagacity of the elephant, the strength and swiftness of the horse, the courage and ferocity of the

lion, the agility and cleverness of the ape, though they may give the victory in isolated cases, are of no avail in the long-run against the intellect of man.

Moreover, the most ignorant savage is not only immensely superior in intellect to the most sagacious brute, but is also capable, if only his education begins sufficiently early and his surroundings are changed, of being brought up to the level of the ordinary civilised man. And, on the other hand, the ordinary civilised man, placed amid less favourable surroundings, and driven to spend all his energies in providing the bare necessaries of life, is certain in the course of a few generations to become degraded to the level of the savage.

And this man alone can search the records of the past, examine the minutest details of the present, and entertain hopes and form plans, not only for the immediate, but also for the most remote future. His far-reaching intellect can measure the distances, count the revolutions, ascertain the weight, predict to a second the transits and eclipses of the sun, moon, and stars, and by analysing their light discover in some degree of what elements they consist.

And all this accumulated knowledge is being constantly turned to practical account, to the increase of man's power and to the improvement of his condition, giving him, not only bows and arrows, swords and spears, spades and pruning-hooks, but also guides to direct him across the trackless ocean, steam-engines to carry him over land and seas, and the lightning to move his machinery, to light his dwellings, and to carry his messages, and even his spoken words, over the land or under the waters, from one side of the globe to the other.

These are some of the facts which would strike any observer, coming, let us suppose, from some other planet, upon the most cursory glance at man as he now exists,

either as the ignorant savage or the highly cultivated European; but they are far from exhausting the characteristics which separate him by an impassable interval from every other creature upon the earth.

The distance between man and the noblest brute becomes infinite when we consider his moral nature, his power of sitting in judgment upon his own conduct, his knowledge of good and evil, and his power of choosing between them, his consciousness of virtue when he makes the right choice, his perception of sin when it is otherwise, his sense of shame, his belief in a life beyond the grave, his knowledge, fear, and love of God.

If, then, we would know what man is, we must not think only of his body, but far more of his spiritual, intellectual, and moral nature. And so, to determine his origin, we must remember that it is the origin of his intellect and spirit that we are most concerned to look for, rather than for that of his body.

The inquiry into the origin of man's body may wisely be left to the comparative anatomist or the natural historian. As theologians, we may be well satisfied to leave in its profound mystery the simple and popular statement of Holy Scripture, that God formed man's body like that of all other animals of the dust of the earth, and made him, like them, a living creature.

What then does the Bible tell us about the origin of man? Clearly these two things: That his body is that of an animal, but his spirit an image of God.

So far as his bodily nature is concerned, he was made by the Creator of the very same materials as all the other animals, with this difference only, that there was a more special and a higher purpose in his creation. He was meant to be more than an animal; he was to be raised above all other animals by his intellectual, moral, and immortal

nature. As such, he was to be like God, a god upon earth, a son of God, the supreme ruler of the world, the viceroy of the Great Creator of all.

And so the Bible ascribes the bodily origin of man to the material earth, but his intellectual, moral, and immortal spirit to God Himself. "Which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the Son of God" (St. Luke iii. 38).

The universal experience of mankind and the researches of the scientific inquirer have confirmed these two statements. It is an unquestioned truth in this age of light that man is an animal closely resembling other animals, but that he is also, as it were, a god upon the earth.

By what natural process, which is only another name for the exercise of the Creative Will, man's animal body was formed, we are not told. It is a mystery which the Bible has not revealed, and which the researches of scientific inquirers have not solved; and as such it is a question which we may wisely and safely leave in the hands of the students of anatomy and other kindred sciences. No theory which excludes the constant presence and continuous operation of the energy of the will of the Creator in the natural world can account for the order, the beauty, the traces of design, and the infinite variety which exist in all vegetable and animal life upon the earth. But if we once acknowledge that Divine Omnipresence, it is consistent with all we know of God that He should bring about results partly by gradual processes, and partly by sudden, and even violent changes.

This latter *modus operandi* of the Creator, however, is scarcely sufficiently considered by Evolutionists.

They assume, that which has not been proved, that all existing living things in the vegetable and animal world are the lineal descendants of one or a few low forms of life, and that their present wonderful order and variety are the

result of those slowly operating causes suggested by Darwin and other naturalists.

It is difficult, no doubt, to imagine the sudden appearance in the world of a living creature fully formed but underived from any ancestor. But this difficulty is simply due to our inexperience. We seem to have proved that, in the world as it now exists, there is no such thing as the spontaneous generation of life; that all existing living things must therefore have derived their life by heredity. And so we have no experience whatever of the beginning of life, although we know that it must have begun.

But what do we mean by the beginning of life?

Life is inconceivable to us independent of some living creature.

Abstracted from any living creature, what is it but an abstract term, a mental conception, the name which we give to a certain unique force, producing certain unique results in its connection with the material elements which form the body of an organised living being? Concrete life, the only condition in which we know it, or can form any conception of it, is the life of some living thing, whether vegetable or animal.

It follows that whenever life began in this world of ours, there must have appeared a living creature, an invisible life clothed in a material form. Something, in fact, must have happened with more or less suddenness quite outside all our present experience.

It is equally certain that this could not have happened without a cause, and without a very wonderful and mighty cause. And whatever secondary causes may have contributed to this result, the links in the chain of causation, if we could trace them, would bring us at last to the *Causa Causarum*, the volition of the Creator, the Author and Giver of life.

Since life, then, must have begun by the appearance of a living creature, we can scarcely help asking ourselves some such questions as these: Was it one living creature, or did a hundred, or a thousand, or a million living creatures show themselves in material forms with more or less suddenness on the face of the earth, in the air, and in the waters? And again, were they all exactly alike, or was there considerable variety in their nature and form, with inherent possibilities of an almost endless variation and adaptation to surroundings by heredity, natural and sexual selection, and other modifying causes?

That there should be an obvious unity of plan in them all is what we should naturally expect to find in the works of One Creative Mind; and that the limbs, joints, and muscles of all should be very much alike, because constructed upon the same sound mechanical principles, varying only to suit the needs of each individual or type, is also what we should expect to find in the creatures of the Omniscient. For the same reason we find bows and arrows of much the same form in the hand of the English archer or of the American savage, and the ropes and pulleys employed by Layard to remove the winged lions of Nineveh differing scarcely at all in arrangement from the tablet which he afterwards found representing those used by the Assyrian engineer to erect them there three thousand years before.

A similar application of the mechanical powers will not indeed account for all the resemblances which we find in the structure of living creatures varying otherwise in nature, form, and habits; but it is one very obvious though much forgotten cause of those resemblances; and it proves, at any rate, that there is no necessity to attribute them all to heredity.

When life first began, millions of living things may have appeared, either at once or in succession, as the earth was

suited to them. But we may be certain that, although they probably varied immensely in form and structure, they were all necessarily made in accordance with the universal and unchanging laws of Nature.

The clock and the watermill are not much alike; the one also marks the time and the other grinds our corn; yet in both the same natural law is observed; in both gravitation is the motive power; in both that power is directed and controlled on the same mechanical principles.

All living creatures, in like manner, inasmuch as they are living machines in which the motive power is the energy of that force which we call life, must necessarily have their joints and muscles arranged in such a manner as to illustrate the application of the mechanical powers. Their likeness to one another in this respect may therefore be due in some measure to the same cause as that which makes the clock and the watermill something alike; and so need not be entirely the result of heredity.

Admitting, then, that naturalists have proved how powerful has been the influence of heredity, natural selection, and other causes in modifying the forms of living creatures, it cannot be said they have given us any reason to conjecture that all have been derived from one or a very few low forms of life. Nor have they even approached the solution of the great enigma of the origin of life, or of the conditions under which it was first manifested in organised material bodies.

Whenever life began, one or many living creatures must have appeared with more or less suddenness. What is there, then, in Nature which may help us to form some conception of the sudden appearance of a visible organised body?

We may compare it to the sudden, startling, and often wholly unexpected results of chemical combination. Chemical combination is constantly going on in the great laboratory

of Nature, sometimes slowly, often with startling suddenness. Under the proper conditions several elements combine in an instant, and form a visible body differing in many properties from any one of them. One of the conditions is usually the suitable temperature; and these combinations are due to certain mysterious energies and affinities inherent in the elements themselves.

Life or vital force, in like manner, is a profoundly mysterious energy, acting constantly upon surrounding material elements, and compelling them to combine in certain proportions and to produce living material bodies, having each their own proper nature, form, and faculties, giving to each a body, and "to every seed its own body."

May not living creatures, then, have appeared with suddenness, and with much variety of form and nature and inherent powers of reproduction, by the energy of life exciting chemical combination?

As an example of chemical combination let us consider the formation of water.

It is the result of the combination in certain proportions of the two gases hydrogen and oxygen. These two elements are in their properties unlike one another, and water formed by their sudden combination is not the least like either of them. Bring these two gases together in a receiver in their proper proportions. They float together uncombined so long as they remain at the same temperature. Pass an electric spark through them. There is an explosion, and in an instant these gases have combined; no trace of their separate existence remains; they have formed a drop of water.

Let us consider some of the properties of this water.

It may be decomposed again into its elementary parts and become again free hydrogen and oxygen, just as a vegetable or animal body is decomposed when its com-

bining vital energy has left it. But so long as it remains water, it must exist, like most other substances, in one of three forms, gaseous, liquid, or solid. Sufficiently heated, it becomes an invisible vapour; sufficiently chilled, it becomes liquid; and then, when further reduced in temperature, it becomes solid and assumes its own proper form, which we see in the beautiful crystals of ice and snow.

What we thus observe in water we may observe in thousands of other substances which are the results of chemical combination; and almost all of them have their proper geometrical form, which they assume in the process of crystallisation.

It is evident from this that there must be inherent in every material substance, whether it be simple or compound, some deeply mysterious and irresistible energy compelling it, amid the proper surroundings and at the proper temperature, to assume a definite form, and always its own characteristic form, and that often in a moment of time.

Of this irresistible energy we know absolutely nothing. We only know by experience that under certain conditions it produces certain results. We know also that the force which it exercises bears some relation to temperature.

We must admit the same or even greater ignorance of that energy which we call life, which is inherent in living creatures, and which compels them to keep on assimilating substances with which they come in contact, and forming them into their own proper shape—in the case of vegetables, directly from the material elements; in that of animals, indirectly from feeding on other organised bodies.

It is remarkable also that the energy of life is dependent on temperature. Even the vegetable cannot live or grow in an unsuitable temperature, and the life of the animal is even more dependent upon it. The amount of temperature necessary for healthy life also varies in different

animals and vegetables, as it does for the combination of material substances.

These and similar analogies cannot indeed explain, but help us to form some conception of the beginning of life. It must have been thoroughly natural, but may have been marvellously sudden. It must have been natural, even if it happened only once, for it must have been the result of causes then set in operation by the energy of the God of Nature. It must have been as natural as the act of the chemist in his laboratory.

To produce a drop of water, or to form some other compound substance, some useful body or some beautiful crystal, the chemist brings together the necessary elements in the right proportions. Then he raises or reduces the temperature, adds the necessary ingredient to cause combination, or it may be passes through them an electric spark. The result is commonly instantaneous; at any rate, the elements immediately obey him with more or less suddenness; they combine as he wishes; the required substance is formed, and in its own proper shape.

Was it harder, was it less natural, though He may have done it only once, for the Great Chemist of the universe, the Author and Giver of life, to say once for all, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself. . . . Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind. . . . Let us make man in our own image after our likeness," and then to leave them to work out His further purposes by the operation of heredity, natural and sexual selection, and other forces?

Whether life began once only in the history of our earth, and from causes which operated once only and have since ceased to operate, or whether the start was made on several occasions, we cannot even form a conjecture, having few,

it any, well-ascertained facts to guide us. On the whole, perhaps, it seems most probable that there was only one commencement of life, though possibly by a succession of acts during one life-creating period. All we know for certain is, that life, having once begun, is continued by heredity, and apparently has no spontaneous origin.

In like manner there are substances in the inanimate world which assumed their present form under circumstances which no longer exist and from causes which no longer operate. The diamond, for example, is the result of the crystallisation of pure carbon. But no one has yet ascertained what was the condition of the world when that precious and enduring crystal was formed. All we know is, that, having been once formed, it has remained unchanged for ages.

But even after the first creation of living creatures we do not find the Creator working always by slow processes, but often by very sudden changes. Forces long working slowly often end in a most sudden result.

How gradual is the embryonic process, which ends so suddenly in fully developed and independent life! How strangely mysterious the growth of the chicken from the vital spot, scarcely visible under the most powerful microscope, up to the time when the egg is broken and the most sudden change takes place in the living creature, which then comes forth from its prison into the light of individual life!

It is natural also to suppose that God would employ what He has made for the formation of that which He purposes to make. Not only, therefore, is it a universal law that, since the first creation of living things, life can only originate from life, but also that the animal can live and grow only by feeding upon that which has had life. Our human bodies are formed entirely of the food which we eat; and

so, that which yesterday was a grain of wheat or the flesh of an ox or sheep is to-day part of a human body.

There is, therefore, nothing *a priori* inconceivable or necessarily repulsive in the idea that man's body, as it exists now, may be the result of a long chain of secondary causes, of a long process of life derived from life. Our connection in this case with the primeval germs of life, or with the apes, ape-like men and man-like apes, our ancestors, according to the grotesque and unproved theory of the Evolutionist, would not be nearly so close or so real as our present connection with the growing plant or the ox or sheep which we saw grazing so peacefully in the meadow only a few days ago.

There is no occasion, therefore, to feel anxious about the possible verification of Darwin's theory of the descent of man, or of any similar suggestion offered as a solution of the mystery of man's bodily origin.

Evolution, even by the admission of its supporters, is at present only a theory, not wholly unsupported by some very interesting facts, but flatly contradicted by many others, and quite incapable of accounting for the endless variety of vegetable and animal life, except upon the assumption that the evolutionary process is under the constant control and direction of the wisdom and power of the Creator Himself.

This theory, moreover, without the assumption of constant Divine direction, if not of occasional interference, fails altogether to account for the many impassable intervals which exist now, and apparently always have existed, not only between man and the brute creation, but also between many orders of beings.

These intervals also keep on widening as the scale of being ascends. The lower forms of life shade off into one another like the colours of the rainbow, and the connecting-links are close and numerous. But as organic life becomes

higher and more intricate, the intervals become wider, the connecting-links more rare, and the characteristic differences more numerous and more sharply defined, until we reach the immeasurable gulf which separates the most degraded human being from the most intelligent brute.

Clearly, therefore, there must have been some or many other causes in operation besides natural selection or any of those suggested by Evolutionists to produce those increasingly wide and impassable intervals. What those causes were may yet be discovered, or they may remain for ever unknown; but, as believers in the Living God, we have no hesitation in saying that, whatsoever may have been the secondary causes, the first of all was the energy of the Divine will, the wisdom, power, and goodness of Him who is not bound to explain to us the wonders of His works.

He tells us all we need know when He inspires His prophet to declare that man was made in His own image after His likeness, that God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

The first man was of the earth earthy; but the full purpose of God was not accomplished, the great evolutionary chain was not completed, until the "Second Man" came, Who is "the Lord from heaven." The first man, Adam, was made an animal soul; the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit.

No discoveries of science can do otherwise than confirm these statements of Holy Scripture, or rob us of our glorious hope that, as we unquestionably bear now the image of the earthly, we shall as certainly hereafter bear the image of the heavenly.

There must have been many transformations or incarnations more or less sudden to have produced the endless varieties of living creatures which now exist upon the earth, and to have caused the many impassable intervals which

there are between them, if they were not all made so in the first instance, which is more probable.

We await with faith and patience in this earthly tabernacle of a God-born spirit another and a greater transformation, which shall cause another and a more impassable interval between the animal and the man, when "the mystery of God shall be finished, and we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we (the living) shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51), when He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

THE END.

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Dr. Huntingford is no doubt right in thinking that popular misconceptions are a more formidable obstacle to the reception of the Bible than scientific conclusions from observed phenomena. They are something worse even than that; they are not only a bar to the reception of revelation, but substitute falsehood for truth in those who are willing to receive it. In selecting the story of the Creation, the Fall, and the Deluge for his experiment in removing some of these mistaken ideas the author has chosen wisely, for there is no part of Scripture which suffers so much from a merely literal interpretation, and no part which furnishes so many facile objections to the unbeliever. Nothing can be easier than even to make fun out of light being created before the sun, or of the creation of woman, or of the serpent tempting her, or of the Infinite and Absolute walking in a garden, and so on, and such arguments have made many a young infidel. The present writer was once asked by such a philosophic aspirant of fifteen, "Who was Cain's wife?"—a difficulty which Dr. Huntingford easily disposes of. But the objections to the first and second chapter are to be met by a larger treatment; not by smoothing difficulties, but by looking at the narrative from an opposite point of view. Here is a history, perhaps the oldest document in the world, which compared with any other early guesses at the origin of things is pure wisdom, embodying ideas not only consistent with but essential to the best civilisation and the highest form of Christianity. In a couple of pages it lays down the bases of pure religion in the unity of God; of social life in the indissoluble union of man and woman and the sanctity of marriage; of the moral law in the sense of sin which follows upon yielding to temptation, and in the supremacy of conscience which asserts itself when appetite is satiated and passion is subdued, when 'the voice of the Lord God is heard in the *cool* of the day.'

"To claim a spiritual rendering of a spiritual book is the author's chief aim in writing, and his method is the simple one of asking what the text says, treatment to which the *crux* of the 'universal' deluge and of the rainbow readily yields, and which softens down the lapse of Noah into a legitimate conviviality, which the occasion might seem to warrant. He discusses, however, other questions arising out of his subject, such as the curious consistency of the blessing on Japheth with the character and fortunes of the *audax Iapeti genus*, as well as the identity of name; and the inevitable subject of evolution. On this last point he is not quite outspoken; he is sometimes indifferent about it, and sometimes hostile. But the value of the book is that a divine of

undoubted orthodoxy has at last performed an obvious duty to the Bible and to reasonable religion. We are grateful for it, and our gratitude would be increased if he would reduce it to half its size, cutting down his digressions, and avoiding repetitions, and would ask the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to issue it in a cheap form."—*Saturday Review.*

"The patient writer on Biblical difficulties is always welcome. There are many patient students; but we are deluged with publications containing the crude conclusions of impatient enemies and defenders of the faith. If for nothing else Mr. Huntingford's book is valuable as possessing this rare virtue. No one who knows the author's other works will suppose that he is patiently waiting to see whether the first eleven chapters of Genesis are inspired. Of this he has no doubt. The nature of inspiration is discussed at some length in the second chapter. He defines it as 'superhuman power imparted to the natural faculties of a man by the Spirit of God,' without necessarily implying the revelation of superhuman knowledge at the same time. Hence the writings of inspired men may or may not contain a revelation; they may manifest the workings of an inspired mind dealing with knowledge obtained from natural sources of information, or they may manifest both an inspiration and a revelation at the same time. In either case, from the nature of inspiration, inspired men must 'always speak of natural phenomena in the popular language of their day.' On this clear basis he deals with the 'misconceptions.' Their origin is well described :—

"'Many have been brought up from their childhood with the idea that every single word of the Bible was dictated to the writer by the Holy Spirit. More than this, they have been taught that the commonly received—(perhaps more correctly, popular and untheological)—interpretation of the Bible must be true; and this is a far more dangerous error than the first. Half the supposed difficulties of Scripture would disappear if men would carefully examine and find out for themselves the exact meaning of the words of the Bible.' In the Mosaic account of creation, Mr. Huntingford says that the truth is taught us 'veiled under the symbolic language of a drama;' but it is immaterial to inquire whether a revelation was made to the writer, or whether he was guided by the Holy Spirit rightly to interpret the facts of his own observation, or whether, under the same guidance, he made a selection from materials derived from tradition. In the same way the account of the Garden of Eden, of its first inhabitant, 'a guileless, helpless, adult infant,' of the creation of Eve, and of the Fall, is a 'most truthful picture of human nature,' and of 'the nature and origin of sin.' But—

"'We need not feel bound even to make up our own minds, much less to dogmatise to others, about this story. So long as we accept the profound truths which it teaches as coming to us from the Spirit of God, we may fairly regard it as an open question whether it is a literal narrative or a Divine allegory.'

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